

DRAMATIC
CRITICISM
1900-1901.

J.T.Grein

CORNELL
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY



BEQUEST OF
GEORGE JEAN NATHAN
Class of 1904

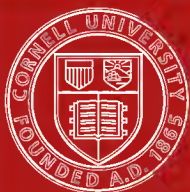
Cornell University Library
PN 2595.G82D7
v.3

Dramatic criticism /



3 1924 026 123 319

olin



Cornell University
Library

The original of this book is in
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in
the United States on the use of the text.

DRAMATIC CRITICISM

Three Stories of the Stage.

SMART, CLEVER, BRILLIANT and INTERESTING.

AT ALL LIBRARIES AND BOOKSELLERS.

SIX SHILLINGS EACH.

Back to Lilac Land.

By C. RANGER-GULL,

Author of "The Hypocrite," "Miss Malevolent," "The Serf," etc.

SECOND EDITION.

The Pall Mall Gazette.—"A very intelligent and well-written story. A decidedly entertaining novel—fresh and well constructed, and evidently written by one who understands the inwardness of the profession."

Morning Post.—"A good novel of stage life is a rare bird in this country, and the author of 'Back to Lilac Land,' who has given us this good thing, deserves a full measure of praise."

The Literary World.—"The anonymous author has written a story which all who have seriously considered the subject must applaud as a faithful, reasonable, and powerful account of the touring actor's life. 'Back to Lilac Land' will be classed with George Moore's 'A Mummer's Wife,' and with Leonard Merrick's 'The Actor-Manager,' as one of the three best novels of theatrical life which the last fifteen years have yielded."

Cynthia's Damages.

By REGINALD TURNER,

Author of "The Comedy of Progress," etc.

Sunday Special.—"A bright, amusing story of life behind the footlights."

The Gentlewoman.—"A sprightly amusing yarn. Mr. Reginald Turner is no stranger to life behind the scenes."

Ladies' Review.—"Cynthia's Damages' proves on reading to be one of the smartest and brightest of theatrical tales we have met with for a long time. It is most certainly a novel which will please all women."

The Daily Telegraph.—"A story in which wit, humour, farce, and sarcasm are admirably blended—an extravaganza brimful of fun, and showing considerable power in the management of dialogue as well as in character drawing. The author appears to be what the French call a *blagueur*, and treats the affair of stage-life and society with a polished and easy cynicism that evokes a smile and compels us to read on. . . . The story from beginning to end is sprightly and vivacious, contains many quaint touches of observation, and is altogether a readable book."

In the World of Mimes.

By LEWIS MELVILLE.

Graphic.—"Undeniably interesting. Every page shows that he writes from inside knowledge."

Daily Mail.—"A lurid story of stage life. The book shows real observation and cleverness."

Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News.—"This is distinctly a clever book and ably written."

Bookman.—"A pleasantly written story of theatrical life; vivacious and life-like by reason of its spirited characters and professional details. It is shrewdly observed, and the world and the stage are both described with facility."

Complete Catalogue of Popular Fiction post free on application.

London: Greening & Co., Ltd., 20 Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road.

Dramatic Criticism

Vol. III

1900-1901

By

J. T. Grein

London

GREENING & CO., LTD

20 Cecil Court, St. Martin's Lane, W.C

1902

3782550

MN

PREFACE

This, the third volume of my reprinted notices of plays and actors, is published with the same object as that of its predecessors, namely, to serve, in default of other record, as a contribution towards the history of the doings of the British Drama. This is a matter on which I have endeavoured to qualify myself to express an opinion, and about which it has been my privilege to be allowed, with no consideration either of newspaper circulation or personal interest, to write with absolute freedom and honesty. It may be to this that I owe some part of the success which, I am told, my notices have achieved. It is, at any rate, owing to the kindness of their reception, both in the pages of the *Sunday Special*, and, reprinted, in book form, that I feel it worth while to go on with the task I have set myself.

This task—taken up *con amore*, not as the business of my life, but as the serious occupation of what is too often the better part of life, one's hours of recreation—is nothing less than the reform of the British Stage, given up as it is to star actors, actor-managers, pretentious melodrama, and inane musical comedy, and, when it would be serious, too

often crippled and ruined by the philistine limitations imposed by our grandmotherly censorship. The outlook, very dark twenty years since, is not to-day perhaps quite so hopeless, though still, as we know to our cost, the average play produced is far, very far from the high level of excellence which we have a right to expect in the drama of the country of Shakespeare. Having once stood supreme in the world of the theatre, is it too much to hope that England may one day regain that lost supremacy? Whatever the chances, let us at least, as lovers of the stage, remember that we have a high standard to live up to, and do all that lies in our power to remove the artificial and commercial stumbling blocks from the paths of would-be sincere dramatists.

These reprinted notices are my contribution to the good work.

J. T. G.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Colonel Cromwell	I
Sea-side	5
Self and Lady	9
The Price of Peace	12
The Wedding Guest	15
The Lackey's Carnival	20
Jim Belmont	25
Mrs. Dane's Defence	30
The Noble Lord	35
Charlotte Wiehe, and La Loie Fuller	40
Mr. and Mrs. Daventry	42
Herod	47
The Three Wayfarers <i>and</i> Macaire	54
Johannis-feuer	59
The Swashbuckler	64
The Wisdom of the Wise	67
The Second in Command	73
Oscar Wilde as a Dramatist	79
Censor and Censors	84
Benson's Shakespeare Season	89
Lewis Waller as Henry V.	92
Retrospection	95
Michael Kramer	101
A Piece of War	107
Decorum	112
Le Monde ou l' on s'ennuie	118
Twelfth Night	123
The Awakening	127
Peg Woffington	131

A Cigarette-Maker's Romance	134
Die Schmetterlings-slacht	137
Revival of Peril	140
A Hint to Mœcenas	146
Revival of "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith"	151
Der Dornenweg	156
George Alexander's Munificence	159
Rosenmontag	163
Die Ehre	168
A Play of Atmosphere	173
The Wilderness	178
Coriolanus	183
Count Tezma	187
The Royal Necklace	190
Sweet and Twenty, <i>and</i> The Man from Blankley's	194
Two Plays by Alfred Capus	198
A Theatre Français for London	203
Ibsen's "Pillars of Society"	208
The Sacrament of Judas	213
Mariana	216
Women are so Serious	221
A Lady from Texas	225
L'Aiglon	228
Robert Buchanan as a Dramatist	233
Rejane as Sapho	238
Rejane—Tragedienne	243
When We Were Twenty-One	249
John Durnford, M.P.	254
Sherlock Holmes	257
Are You a Mason?	261
The Importance of Being Earnest	264
The Truth About Hauptmann's Latest Play	268
The Trance of Humour	273
The Drama's Balance Sheet	278
The Twin Sister	284
Frocks and Frills	290
Mrs. Warren's Profession	293
After All	297
Mademoiselle Mars	301
George Worlitzsch	303

“COLONEL CROMWELL”

September 16, 1900.

I.

THE very name of Cromwell is apt to render us unexpectant, for he was by no means a gay dog, he had no tenderness in his composition, and love—if he knew such love as we are wont to associate with men of distinction—played an altogether uninteresting part in his life-story. Therefore great as his name is in history, for the drama he is practically an unadaptable personality; and it is noteworthy that all the plays, English or foreign, which have been built round his character, have either failed or sunk into oblivion. Yet Cromwell, as we remember him, possessed two qualities which in themselves are rich in dramatic possibilities. His will-power and his character alike were strong as iron, and his religious convictions vied in inflexibility with those of early Christian martyrs. How is it, then, that, with such elements at their command, the dramatists have not succeeded in vitalising Cromwell on the stage? The answer is, I think, that the great Puritan was too much of an extremist in every sense to make a sympathetic stage figure. His character was not only strong, it was rigid; his religiousness was sincere, but almost bigoted; and the greatest doctrine of all Christianity, that by which we are taught to love our neighbours as ourselves, did not modify his strict adherence to the letter of the law. His was the creed that preaches hell instead of all-merciful forgiveness.

II.

The reason why I state the above, as a preface to an unfavourable criticism on a dull and ill-manufactured play, is that I wish to plead extenuating circumstances for the authors. If not Cromwell but some other military gentleman had been the peg whereon to hang a story of love, intrigue, and a fatal scrap of paper, we should, perhaps, have been spared the dulness. Cromwell by another name, and shorn of the oratory befitting the pulpit of a corrugated chapel, might have been a fascinating swash-buckler, and the one stirring scene of the play, wherein the Colonel suddenly draws away a curtain and displays the army, for which his comrades have been clamouring in order to be able to fight, would then, perhaps, have been the redeeming feature. Unfortunately the pulpit oratory undid what the dramatists had tried to achieve, and when act after act ended with invocative soliloquies, while the curtain finally descended upon the word "Amen," it was not at all astonishing that the plaudits of the partisans were somewhat rudely broken in upon by the groans of the malcontents. The latter, like myself, had taken a dislike to this Cromwell, who constantly had the name of his Maker in his mouth, and whose deeds were the veriest antithesis to Christian love.

Moreover, the story of the play was about as clear as the vision of Mars which you get for two sous through the telescope of the Place de la Concorde. It was a hotch-potch of allocutions and incidents and haziness, with a little noise of soldiery, and the terrible tomfoolery of a Puritan private into the bargain. This so-called comedy relief was positively torturous, and it is devoutly to be hoped that, after this last discomfiture, the would-be comic Round-Head-of-all-work may receive final notice to quit. The perambulating Tommy Atkins who belongs to the stock-in-trade of latter-day melodrama, goes a long way, so there is no further need for the services of the jesting Puritan.

III.

If there was little to occupy the mind in the play of "Colonel Cromwell," there was something to please the eye in the picturesque scenery and raiment, and also some interest in the interpretation. That no one achieved a remarkable histrionic success is not the actors' but the authors' fault. There is a sort of duologue which defies the most impassioned elocution. But Miss Suzanne Sheldon undoubtedly took the honours of the evening, albeit less by the power of her acting than by the winsomeness of her personality. She looked the maiden of the period to perfection, and the very limitations of her voice and emotional gifts enhanced rather than detracted from the charm of her performance. Whether the artist, in a part of greater difficulty, would prove equal to the position of leading lady, cannot as yet be judged. As Rachel Fullerton there was not much chance for Miss Sheldon to be anything but sweet, and in the one scene of "outburst" she seemed to be more forceful than forcible. Still, on the whole, it was a creditable performance, which will awaken interest in the future career of this young actress. Mr. Charles Cartwright as Cromwell was a picture to behold, and his well-known melodramatic sledge-hammer style did something to enliven the dullness of the proceedings. But Mr. Cartwright's elocution in large doses is not very stimulating. His delivery is not only decisive, it is positively aggressive. In a way he reminds me constantly of Louis XIV.: "I am the play—*car tel est mon plaisir.*" And then he is always "staccato," and he multiplies his consonants at the beginning of the words to such a degree that the vowels are well-nigh smothered. When one hears his thunderous *r* rolling like a volley fired in the distance, his luxurious *l* drawn out like a lump of toffee in an urchin's mouth, his endless *m* like a speaking doll's *mma-mmma*, one dreams half a century away, and awakes to ask the question: Is this method a revival of the fifties, or has the clock stood

still? In minor actors, for there were other steam-rolling elocutionists on the Globe stage in "Cromwell," one passes these things over, as some time or other a stage manager or an author will break them of their habit. But when it concerns an artist who holds a leading part, who is constantly on the stage, and (being part-author) has well provided himself with lengthy speeches, the very esteem one has for his talent demands outspokenness. The mannerisms of Mr. Cartwright's diction discount his value as an actor, weaken his force, and mar the interest his powers and his personality arouse. There is in Mr. Cartwright something more than mere melodramatic qualifications. There is that in him which makes tragedians, and it rests with him to decide whether he will rise to the most exalted form of the drama, or remain content with the commonplace laurels which Dame Melodrama twines so liberally for the adepts of her choice.

EMPIRE: "SEA-SIDE"

September 23, 1900.

I

The tableaux at the Empire are always delightful as a spectacle. Mr. George Edwardes and his designer, Wilhelm, have a great deal of taste, and their eye for a harmonious mixture of colours is nothing short of remarkable. One is never likely to forget any fanciful production in which Mr. Edwardes has a hand; the lovely streamers of flowers that descended from the tea-house in "The Geisha" have become world-famed; the scenery of "San Toy" will be a feast for the eye in every continental country; and, to hark back, the lovely gowns of the Gaiety-girls who danced the pas-de-quatre will still wave before us when the play to which they belonged, has long since escaped our memory.

In almost every creation produced under the management of Mr. Edwardes this pleasant gift of "trooping the colour" is the same, and "Sea-Side" is no exception to the rule. "The Rose of England" dance of the bonnie lassies in their sun-bonnets and their bewitching little frocks of white lace, is as pretty a picture of children's life as we have beheld for a long time. Just the thing to win the heart of every woman, and to soften the features of the most matter-of-fact man. Then there are the costers, the pals in close-fitting checks, with the inevitable mother o' pearl buttons; the donahs gorgeous in blazing red and blue gowns, with ditto frills and furbelows, and in cartwheel hats *à la* Rubens, that would have yellowed

Mistress Gwyn with envy. Finally, to round off the enumeration of pictorial attractions, I would cite the group of Italian dancers, whose multi-coloured ribbons intermingle so harmoniously while they dance, that a huge rainbow seems to arch the stage.

II

The music of Mr. Leopold Wenzel is precisely what it should be—vivid, tuneful, and discreetly interwoven with songs of the music-hall and arias from popular musical comedies. Here and there Mr. Wenzel borrows a valse or a march from his own former compositions, and, far from blaming him for it, we welcome these old acquaintances, some of which (notably a march-motive which came from "Monte Christo") are very original and impressive. But, leaving alone the general musical value of the tunes that accompany the tableaux, they are eminently "danceable," and better than anything else of the same kind in London. Nor, too, does London know a better prima ballerina than Mdle. Adeline Genée. She is a delightful mistress of her craft, and, although she is, as I believe, a Dane by birth, she has acquired the best features of the Paris and Milan schools without indulging in the terrible affectations of most foreign dancers. In fact, so simple is Mdle. Genée in all she does that she fails to arouse as much enthusiasm as she deserves. Curiously enough for many years the London public has failed to do justice to the prima ballerina; it prefers skirt-dances—or, rather, one should say skirt-pacing, after the English style, and hornpipe variations, in which Mr. Will Bishop excels.

About the *corps de ballet* little is to be said. The same evolutions with arms and legs, the same caroussels, the same dutiful but uninspired execution of the Kitti Lanner system. The fact of the matter is that most of our ballet girls are not dancers at all—they are hoppers and pacers and acrobatic contortionists; they do not practise, with their feet at least, terpsichorean art. On the contrary, following the methods of Madame Katti Lanner, they do

with their arms and hands what tradition has taught us to expect from legs and feet. Nimbleness and grace are with them confined to the upper part of the body, and this, however interesting it may be for a time, becomes monotonous in its uniformity. If there were less discipline and more inspiration in our *corps de ballet*, less manœuvring and more real dancing, the charm of the whole display would be greatly enhanced.

In the beginning of this article I referred to "Sea-Side" as a *tableaux*. Designedly I withheld the word ballet, which, in spite of the programme, it is not. A ballet is an interpretation, through the medium of dancing, of a definite story. Abroad poets write the libretto of a ballet, and they work it out as minutely and as dramatically as if it were a play or an opera. Hence the text of some ballets, such as "Sylvia," "Coppelia," "Excelsior," "Die Puppenfee," and many others, has inspired first-rate composers and become grafted upon the memory of the spectators. But who cares a jot for the plot of "Sea-Side," who could follow it if he would, in spite of a long list of *dramatis personæ*, who are duly named and labelled as if they were indispensable parts of the programme? The thread that should hold the various elements together, that should intensify, aye, and justify, the different dances and *tableaux*, is wanting. And thus it shines and fades like a firework, leaving nothing but here and there a vision of beautiful colouring. I think that this neglect of the ground-work of our so-called ballets is a mistake which should be remedied, particularly at an institution so resourceful and so prosperous as the Empire. It is neither Madame Lanner's business nor her gift to conceive ballets, it is hers to produce them, but the invention of the plot should be entrusted to imaginative writers, who have some dramatic instinct. Mr. Anthony Hope, Mr. Louis Parker, Mr. Basil Hood, Mr. Robert Hichens should try their hand at the composition of ballets, and they need not blush at my suggestion; and with Armand Silvestre, with Marengo (Excelsior), with Raimond, they are in very good company; and, once they had tried the new departure, they would

soon feel strangely fascinated by the charm of this wordless, yet eminently expressive, form of art. Perhaps one of these days the ever alert directorate of the Empire will open a competition for the book of a ballet of English invention, and thereby endeavour to resuscitate an interesting form of the drama, which, for want of encouragement, has been allowed to decline.

VAUDEVILLE: "SELF AND LADY,"

September 23, 1900.

A Farcial Comedy, in Three Acts, by Pierre Decourcelles.

There are three ways to go about the task of criticising farcial comedies spiced with suspicions of marital infidelity and senile prowess in the field of Venus. You either dine not wisely but too well, and then you are on a level with the majority of the audience, and your criticism will be in the best of moods. Or you dine wisely and not well, and then, wearied in your sober mood, you may feel tempted to be serious and severe. The best thing, however, I think, is not to dine at all, and to judge the pace of the actors by the pangs of your hunger. In this race between the thing spiritual and the desires material, one gets unwittingly into the right mood; one overlooks little indelicacies, one ignores phrases with equivocal meanings, and, generally, treats the whole thing with amiable contempt—in fact, as a farce. You will gather from the above statement that I was temperate, in the best sense of the word, when I sat out the première of "Self and Lady," and that this happy constitutional state rendered me indulgent. Otherwise I might have addressed some remarks to the eternal "private-room" behind whose panels during the last thirty years French playwrights have imagined things which are unfit to be seen, and can only be spoken of in dialogue of double-faced insinuation. All that need be referred to for the edification and the enlightenment of the curious reader, is that we have here the usual domestic quarrel culminating in flirtations with other men's wives and other wives' husbands; the usual gay old dog, whose dreadful old Dutch would almost justify

a little escapade in fresh woods and pastures new; the same rapacious landlord of the restaurant "de nuit"; the same confusion in Act II., and the same explanations and osculations in Act III. Only there is a difference. Usually the first act is clever, the second splendid, and the third lame as a duck. Here the first act is most amusing, the second clumsy and of inordinate length, and the third acceptable and fairly plausible. It is almost a case of Rutland Barrington's little wives in "San Toy." The more you take away the happier you might be. The second act is superfluous—almost an exact copy of "A Night Out," and it entails a lot of work for the actors, which is unrewarded by an equal amount of laughter. All said and told, "Self and Lady" is better than "Kitty Grey," its predecessor, because it is less disagreeable (although one scene between Mr. Hicks and Miss Emily Miller is so uncomplimentary to the personality of the actress that it is distasteful), but it lags a good way behind other specimens from the Palais Royal.

The acting was fair, and one actor made a conspicuous success. I refer to Mr. Cosmo Stuart, a young comedian, who has steadfastly worked his way up in his profession, and who, after coming out very well in "Miss Hobbs," has now convinced everybody that he is a comedian of no mean order. The part which he filled, that of a somewhat adventurous operatic tenor, was both easy and difficult—easy, because on the surface there was many a laugh in it; difficult, because there was every risk of falling into exaggeration. Mr. Cosmo Stuart caused immense laughter, and almost entirely avoided exaggeration. He created a type, familiar to every one who knows theatrical life in small continental towns, but which to our public afforded some novelty by its originality of conception. Mr. Hicks, who had a long and onerous task, playing, as usual, the straying husband, was not a little ingenious and most amusing, except when at table. He still gobbles and speaks with an overfull mouth. Miss Ellaline Terriss is always a pleasant actress, but she has never been a thorough comedienne, and does not improve.

She takes the thing too tragically, and is sentimental where there should be lightness of touch and glibness of tongue. However, we may still hope to see this talented lady in a part more fit for her powers ; her present lot is uncongenial.

DRURY LANE: "THE PRICE OF PEACE,"

A Drama of Modern Life by Cecil Raleigh.

The same old story, nothing new!

The play did not matter, but the show was magnificent. Like the late Sir Augustus, Mr. Arthur Collins has "surpassed himself," Mr. Glover, the musical conductor, has "surpassed *himself*," and Mr. Clarkson has surpassed the finest wigs he has ever produced. (One could have wished Mr. John Burns had been there to see how they surpassed *him* in effigy.)

Unless one has a preference for the biograph, which is at least silent, there is nothing more exciting than the animated and coloured pictures of life to be seen at Drury Lane. They would be even more attractive if they were accompanied by wordless play, for the picture, not the story, is the thing. And as a picture, we have been rarely treated to anything so fascinating as the almost interminable series of glimpses of London life, which are now to be seen at Drury Lane. Whether it be the skating-rink at Niagara Hall, or the altar at the Abbey, or the interior of the House of Commons, or a section of a steam yacht, showing deck and saloon, it is all equally accurate, all equally gorgeous. One may regret that so much money should be spent on mere outward splendour, and that the frame carries the play, instead of *vice versa*, but, leaving the sacred word of art entirely out of the question (in a house once devoted to the best that art could produce, O tempora!), nothing but praise can be bestowed on the directors for their munificence. That the so-called sensation-scene, the foundering of a yacht, fails to chill the

audience to the bone, because everyone is fairly accustomed to that sort of thing, is not the producer's fault—the intention was excellent. That the scene in Parliament, a marvel in design, did not thrill the audience quite as much as it would have done ten years ago, before the lawyer in "A Man's Shadow" had dropped dead, just as the Prime Minister does now in the midst of his speech; that a good many people found the scene in the Abbey, wherein a portion of the wedding service was textually recited, a gross violation of decorum, all that is not the producer's fault. He has done his work splendidly, and all London should run to old Drury.

As for the play, I prefer to repeat that it does not matter, for a serious discussion about various points of its taste and spirit would perhaps lead to idle and unprofitable controversy. I admire the patience of a public that tolerates in "a play of modern life"—*modern life*, if you please!—the suggestion that an M.P. should attempt to sell his country, aided and abetted by the daughter of a Cabinet Minister; or the representation of a religious function in melodrama. Undoubtedly there is some cleverness in such work as "The Price of Peace," for it requires imagination to tell, year after year, the same old story in more or less fresh words; but, as a specimen of its class, the latest National Drama is not as good as many of its predecessors. In the very first tableau there is an endless death-scene (four-and-a-half minutes' soliloquy) which is as wearisome as it is unpleasant; and indeed, the story struggles and demands so much credulity on the part of the spectator, that the interest sinks from act to act, and is only quickened now and again by the scenery. The result was a reception in which "a spoonful of tar spoilt the sweetness of the honey-cask."

These first nights at Drury Lane are so very trying for the actors that every indulgence should be extended to them. Still Miss Lettice Fairfax was not a felicitous selection as the heroine. Her emotional powers are very limited. Mr. Henry Neville was, as usual, at his best in his long harangues. He is always an impressive figure

in melodrama. Mr. Cooper Cliffe, burdened with the ungrateful task of the despicable traitor M.P. acted with much discretion, and in the Parliament scene he had a moment of real eloquence. Mrs. Raleigh filled the part of a South American Lady with some humour and much routine. Later, when all works more smoothly, she will no doubt endow the character with more individuality. Amongst a host of other people, hard workers all, a newcomer, Miss Flossie Wilkinson, made the most lasting impression. She had but the veriest stump of a part, yet that was sufficient to reveal an actress born.

GARRICK: "THE WEDDING GUEST,"

A Play in Three Acts by J. M. Barrie.

September 30, 1900.

I.

Mr. J. M. Barrie has endeavoured to solve a knotty problem. An artist has lived the life that most artists live. When the day of parting comes the woman bears the consequences, but she goes without revealing the truth. Instead she exacts a futile promise that he will never marry another woman.

Anon the artist gets "straight," marries wealth and beauty combined with exquisite gifts of character and infantile immaturity. In fact, the girl is at twenty at the same point where most girls are at ten.

On the wedding day—the most charming picture of a Scotch marriage ever conceived by a modern dramatist—an accident, due solely to the long arm of coincidence, brings the pre-nuptial wife of the artist upon the scene.

And now the problem slowly, yet with some violence, asserts itself, in spite of the gaiety of the wedding party, for the mistress still loves the man, and the broken promise rouses her to frenzy. If she had spoken then and there, when any possible forbidders of the banns were asked to speak, there would have been a conflict of great power, a problem of real human interest. But Mr. Barrie does not dare to go so far as that; he prefers to drift into the well-known back-waters of British melodrama, and, constructively at any rate, the play is as old-fashioned

and lengthy as any of its fellows of the old familiar pattern.

Still we get at the problem eventually, and we have it before us in the shape of the unacknowledged babe that stands between its father and his bride. That baby is very much in the way, as you can imagine, and, in order to get rid of it, everybody indulges in a game of battledore and shuttlecock with the unfortunate little thing. The mother—furious and distracted—conceives the somewhat diabolical plan of offering it as a wedding present to her lover's wife. Then that wife's goodness and (infantile) innocence softens her anger, and she relents, thereby ending the story so far as we are concerned; for, if the young wife continues to live in ignorance, her bliss will be unimpaired. But—we are only through one act and a half, and we must have more; so, to everybody's amazement, the husband makes a clean breast of it, and the wife goes to her father.

II.

Things are serious now. We have the husband on our hands; we have to dispose of mistress and baby; we have to console the unhappy young wife; we have to restore peace all round before it is eleven o'clock. What is to be done? The husband suggests eternal parting from his wife and lifelong devotion to mistress and child; the young wife—with the mind of ten—is prepared to adopt the ready-made off-spring; the wife's father, like a good old bourgeois, offers cash and a cottage in Australia; the woman herself offers to go back to her father, and upon that husband and wife make it up.

All this is very charming, but it is no solution. Ethically it is as false from beginning to end as the dramatic situations, which are brought about by these propositions, are forced. No husband is such a fool as to confess to "extraneous paternity," when the necessity for such a confession does not exist. No English girl who, according to her own blood-relations, is as innocent as the snow-

flake whirled down from the skies, would, in the very midst of her honeymoon, adopt a love-child of her husband's, and money and cottages are no solace for such women as Kate Ommaney. Then comes the conclusion, the proposal that caps all others in its misconception of "modern life." The woman will take her child and go home to her father. First of all, this is no solution at all. That child will ever stand between husband and wife, and, as it grows older, as children are born in wedlock, the gulf will widen. It will be the skeleton in the cupboard. Next, does Mr. Barrie really believe that a middle-class father (Scotch or English) will open his arms to the fallen daughter and the spurious grandchild? Nothing of the sort. I will tell you what he will do. He will preach to her of family honour, in language adorned with oaths, and thrust her from the threshold. That he will—and the streets of London are there to prove that I am right. And, if Mr. Barrie says in defence, "There may be a forgiving father among the thousands," I will answer him, "Then you should have introduced him into your play; I do not accept make-believes. I, as a spectator, expect from the dramatist that he should make plausible the things he propounds; it is no proof of the exception to ignore existence of the rule."

The author knows as well as I do what would have been the course of things in the middle-class home when once the husband had opened his mouth. The wife would have gone from him in horror, and father-in-law would have locked the door. Then time would or would not have accomplished the process of healing. As for the mistress, I dare not conjecture; there are a thousand issues. What happens to the majority? Look around you and ask yourselves. Their fate may be immersion in the quicksands of other cities; they may drift into respectability and marriage. But as a rule they would prefer shame, workhouse, or death to the clemency of our middle-class fathers.

III.

I break lances with Mr. Barrie—in fact, I have not half done. I should like to have a word with him on that starting-point of his play, and argue about that great question of “prenuptial responsibilities,” but where would we end? And for this very reason I am thankful to him. True, I have tried to demolish the structure, but for all that I appreciate the design and find much praise for the style. At least, here is a play that sets one’s mental machinery in motion. There is something to talk about, to discuss, to criticise. It is the work of a man of ideas, albeit of a man who knows the bright side of life better than the seamy one. Happy man! most will say; yes, happy man indeed, but the painter of life must see from all sides; partial knowledge is a dangerous thing.

In detail there is a great deal to admire in Mr. Barrie’s play; its humour is delightful, and throughout there is an earnest effort to endow the characters with an individuality of their own. The exception is the father-in-law, as ludicrous a caricature of a human being as can well be conceived. The man is a mere puppet of antiquated farcical comedy. It talks machine-made nonsense.

The acting was fair, and the smaller characters scored most. The little Scotch girl of Miss Joan Burnett was a little masterpiece. It was a pathetic little figure with a naïve charm that went straight to the heart. The old servant of Mr. A. E. George was another cabinet picture, and in the first act a maid, Miss Blanche Wilmot, attracted my attention by the most natural manner in which she hunted for the wedding-veil. Her “worried look” was inimitable. Miss Violet Vanbrugh had a great task, and she was fairly equal to it. It is a Duse part—a suffering woman like Silvia in “La Gioconda.” Miss Violet Vanbrugh played it somewhat restlessly, in an eruptive style. She was too violent to be sympathetic, yet there were moments of great power, and the person-

ality of the actress was always impressive. If people would only let Miss Vanbrugh be herself, and not persecute her with comparisons between Sarah Bernhardt and herself, she would yet rise high in her profession. At present she wants discipline and a stage-manager with brains to make her appreciate the light and shade of great complex characters. Miss Dorothea Baird is gradually improving. She is a sweet impersonator of womanly virtue, and her presence is always agreeable. Mr. H. B. Irving was the unhappy artist, for whom we could feel but little. The part is thankless, and the actor apparently sighed under his yoke and drifted into preachiness. Still, Mr. Irving's intelligent manner always rivets one's attention. The Scotch "grande dame" of Miss Kate Sergeantson was, in appearance, a lovely picture of Romney endowed with life. Her acting, too, was full of distinction, but in serious moments the effort was greater than the power.

Mr. Barrie's new departure deserves encouragement. The ethics of the play may be faulty, the form conventional, but in spite of all it stands out above the commonplace, for the thoughts expressed by the author beget reflections of our own.

DUKE OF YORK'S: "THE LACKEY'S CARNIVAL,"

An Original Comedy in Four Acts, by Henry Arthur

Jones.

I.

Lest people say that Mr. Jones's play is impossible, that servants don't do such things, I will tell a little story for the truth of which I vouch.

A man of my acquaintance, who lives during a part of the year in Scotland, and also has a mansion in town, was recently called to London on business. In Mayfair his visit was unexpected, most of the servants were out, and the butler had not only shut, but also locked the door. The coachman was wanted; but he, too, was out, so my friend hailed a cab to drive to the City. His temper, as you can imagine, was not of the sweetest, when anon, turning into Oxford Street, he met his landau, spick and span, with four people, apparently country cousins, inside. He stopped the coachman, who turned a pillar of salt, and cross-examined the senior of the party, who, as innocently as possible, told him that he and his family had been staying at the Metropole for a week, and that one day, seeing a landau in the Avenue, apparently "plying for hire," they had engaged it for a pound a day—considerably less than the hotel charge for such conveyance.

I forego the tableau that followed, and return to Mr. Jones's lackey, having shown by my story that high life below stairs is able to imagine even bolder things than the servants' carnival in the third act. But my defence

of the verisimilitude of the author's latest effort does not touch the objections which will be raised against the sordid atmosphere of the play, and the dashes of vulgarity which sometimes offend one's ears. Clever the whole thing undoubtedly is—amazingly clever, and I confess to having been greatly amused and amazed at the author's intimacy with the manners of our gentlemen's gentlemen and the other folk in the Hinterland of fashionable houses; while, in the valet Tarboy, Mr. Jones has given a psychological analysis of a born *chevalier d'industrie* as complete as it is interesting. Tarboy ranks worthily next to the hero of the "Rogue's Comedy," only the latter earned our pity while the former is altogether contemptible.

But all this refers to surroundings and one character. What of the play? Does the plot and the constitution of the main *dramatis personæ* warrant the predominance of the servant's hall? Was it necessary to unveil the adventures of the lackey, the amours of the maid, the dishonesty and disobedience of every individual in the master's house? I fear there is but one opinion as to that, for the building stands on feet of clay; the jealousy of the husband, aroused by the fact that his wife hands notes to the valet, was unwarranted; and if that husband had been a man, and not the thing filled with sawdust that dies when the footlights are turned off, he would have sifted the question to the bottom, would have understood the mistake she made when, in her maidenly foolishness, she wrote romantic stuff to an adventurer; would have recognised her innocence instead of suspecting and accepting as confirmation of his suspicions the cackle of the servants. Finally, with one swift movement of a stoutly-soled British boot, he would have made short work of Master Tarboy's impudent airs and graces, of his abominable blackmail, and last, of his objectionable presence.

And she, the wife, had she been other than a speaking-doll from the stock of our dramatic bauble-shop, would at once have set at rest the groundless fears of her Bengal tiger of a husband; for where there is no guilt, and really

nothing to hide, it is easy to remove the suspense of suspicion. It is the false start which in this case, as in so many others, ruins the play. We are asked to take things for granted, which are only plausible to the childish mind, things which the average intellect sets right long before the playwright has reached the climax of his story. The worst of it is that, when once a play is thus constructed on rickety foundations, the author is almost bound to heap upon them equally doubtful material—to pile up the agony, as one calls it. And so we have to countenance a development so unexpected, so violent, that it fairly strikes us speechless. When the husband, in his mad jealousy, and through the lie of a servant, is led to believe that his wife has really given way to her admirer, who is now the valet Tarboy, he lays violent hands on her, almost throttles her until she swearing to her innocence, “as sure as the child unborn is yours,” brings him to his senses. After that—after submitting the stainless wife to the lowest degradation, after crushing her soul as well as her body—would you believe it, this man is allowed to live ever after in happy wedlock. Such is human nature in our plays of modern life; yes, and in this distortion of life lies the canker that destroys so many striplings of our home-made drama.

II

The mistakes of men of talent are often more interesting than their successes. “The Lackey’s Carnival” will, I fear, rank among such mistakes, and I am not all sure that the play will outlive the impression which it created on the evening of its birth. But there may be some solace to the author in the fact that, much as we disagree with and dislike his story, we are alive to the ingenuity of the side-issues. It is something to a writer’s credit to say that he has observed a phase of life so keenly that the reproduction rivals reality. This is undoubtedly the case in “The Lackey’s Carnival” as far as the servants are concerned. There is much in their sayings and doings which bears

the stamp of truth, and if their manners and speech are not such as we expect from good servants, we cannot deny their appeal as decidedly bad specimens of their class. We hear and see it all in the same way as, in the case of Arthur Morrison's "Child of the Jago," we witnessed the characterisation of low life in the East End. It might have been so, it might have been otherwise, but the ring of truth was there, and that is no mean achievement. Moreover, the actors of the servants' hall helped the author. Mr. Allan Aynesworth gave a marvellous picture of the valet Tarboy the rogue, the deep-dyed scoundrel, with the manners of a man of the world, or better, of a polished adventurer, and the effrontery of an ill-disciplined menial. Mr. Aynesworth, who had the play almost to himself, took no unfair advantage of his position; he did all that the character demanded, but he did it discreetly, I would fain say amiably, if such a term were applicable to a villain. In "The Lackey's Carnival" Mr. Aynesworth had the chance which one day comes the way of every ambitious actor. He has grasped it with eager hands, and has held it tight; the road of success lies clear before him.

In Miss Edith Wynne Matthison he had a valuable partner. She has given us nature's sweet simplicity; she has made us feel; in fine, she has shown us a woman instead of an actress. Later on Miss Matthison will learn the routine of her craft and do away with little failings of speech and motion which are the companions of a comparative novice; but even now the personality is there, the voice is there, the heart is there. That is enough to go on with. Mr. Waring played the husband with intelligence and force, but he still strikes the note of pedantry at times, and thereby turns our sympathy against, instead of towards, the husband. Is there no means of infusing a little more warmth into the diction of this cultured actor? For it is not the text that is to blame, it is the speaker. Among many others, Miss Ida Molesworth, as a lady's maid, deserves a special mention. The character was a mixture of sobs and smiles, of grief and glee, and Miss Molesworth was fully equal to all the variations of her

difficult task, and completed the trio which was mainly responsible for the successful interpretation of "The Lackey's Carnival."

THEATRE METROPOLE: "JIM BELMONT,"

A Play in Three Acts by Mrs. Oscar Beringer.

Oct. 7, 1900.

I.

Mrs. Oscar Beringer is not herself this time. As a rule her name warrants something interesting, a bold proposition, as in "The New Virtue," a clever adaptation from a foreign source, or a poignant drama in miniature. But to find this clever writer piecing together old materials or imitating the "pictures behind the stage" which Berton has handled with infinitely more skill in "Zaza," is a cheerless discovery. There is some compensation in the fact that Jim Belmont is a character in which Miss Esmé Beringer has an opportunity to display the versatility of her gifts and, to a certain extent, the volume of her emotional power; but that does not redeem the play, and one would fain ask whether it was right to waste the talent of the young actress on indifferent material.

I dare say that Mrs. Oscar Beringer had a good idea in her mind when she planned "Jim Belmont." A peep behind the wings is always fascinating, and the atmosphere of the music-hall, with its more unsophisticated manner of speech and behaviour, might even prove more attractive than that of the high-class theatre. But a single touch will not create the atmosphere, particularly when it is felt that the entourage is merely an excuse for the play. Whether Jim Belmont was a music-hall singer, or a flower-girl, or a barmaid, it did not much matter to us, since she was the only real character in the play, and

all the others had but to give her cues to continue the action. Jim—the singer of Lambeth, afterwards the titled lady of Croft Castle—is so much the centre of the whole story that the paraphernalia of the play seemed altogether superfluous, and one would have preferred her reciting her tale of sweets and sorrows in that ballad-form which Mr. George R. Sims knows so well how to handle. Jim had some right to existence; there was an attempt to give her some individuality; but all the others, the amorous manager, the bibulous comic father, the haughty Lady Brabazon, the gold-haired siren who stood between Jim and her husband, a scene-shifter when he was penniless, a baronet through the good offices of fate and melodramatic providence—the whole clan belongs to the haberdasher's emporium which has been "selling off" its wares these last fifty years.

It is a thousand pities that, having laid down the lines for a very good study of character, Mrs. Oscar Beringer should have fallen into the trap of incongruity. Jim starts well enough, and when she, the star with £60 a week, modestly asks the scene-shifter of her heart, with two and sevenpence halfpenny in his pocket, to turn round whilst she tells him of her love, because she fears to offend him, we are at once duly initiated into her character. She is not only a clever girl, not only warm-hearted and full of fine feeling, but she has tact, and will soon adapt herself to every walk of life. But we are mistaken—a month at the Castle has not improved, chastened, or refined Jim's manners, it has deteriorated them. She shocks her surroundings and compromises her husband, and when she finds that this gentleman prefers the society manners of the gold-haired lady, she adopts means of punishment which would be voted in very bad taste, even over Waterloo Bridge. She makes all the guests start aghast by the recital of a vulgar musical ditty, and when this, instead of having the desired effect, only draws the husband nearer to the temptress, she tears off her jewels, and even her corsage, and goes back to the "villa in Lambeth." I do not know whether this behaviour would have

been less grotesque if the whole evolution of the character had been differently handled, or if the dialogue had been less of the conventional stagey order. Anyhow, it failed to convince, and it was not even very exciting. Esmé Beringer alone saved the situation.

The last act was a surprise. Jim was home again, walking about in a white flowing gown, and hatching desperate plans to obtain a divorce. The flowing gown, *à la* Marie Antoinette before her execution, made us all shudder. We saw a poison-phial, an arm-chair, and a long-drawn-out last breath. But Jim was not going to play the vanishing star like that. She knew Victoria's code of law, and upon that knowledge rested her vengeance. When the husband came—he himself said he did not know what for—she went off for a moment and then reappeared in the most glowing war paint ever exhibited by 'Arriet on 'Ampstead 'Eath. Then she "went for" her lord and master, and, after several futile attempts to rouse his anger, provoked him at last to give her a blow. Now the course was clear for a divorce! But it did not happen; that blow had the most marvellous effect one could well imagine. It restored the happy union of the couple. The husband, who in Act II. had protested to the golden-haired lady that he did not love his wife, now suddenly discovered that he did. I recommend the remedy to all the belaboured wives who daily tell their tales of woe before our magistrates. The logic of the thing, however, is another matter. In Augier's "*Aventurière*" there is, if my memory be not at fault, a scene in which a blow turns the contempt of a woman into passionate affection. It was hotly discussed at the time, but physiologists defended it on the plea that male force may effect wonderful changes in the minds of some women. And, in our days, we have heard in the police-courts more than once that women consider the ill-usage of their "old men" as part and parcel of their domestic felicity. But that a man's love should be roused by an act of violence on his part, if not unique (what is unique in this life of ours?), is so antagonistic to the normal

conception of the male character that it is impossible to accept the proposition. Sometimes, when an author displays a great command of language and of forcible arguments, we may be coaxed to swallow a camel for a while—Dumas fils and other writers of that stamp often succeeded in making us do this—but when the play is of the ordinary theatrical mould, we are not to be beguiled. The author may be in earnest, but we—in the American fashion—"we should smile."

II.

To write at length about a play which is not of sterling value, is to pay a compliment to the authoress. I might go further, and make some flattering statements as to Mrs. Beringer's knowledge of the stage, the ease with which she brings situations about, the provincial possibilities of her play; but all that would be mere verbiage. A clever woman like our authoress would see through such flattery, and despise it. Actors, as a rule, like their little wounds of vanity bandaged with a profusion of plaster, but the ordinary mortal does not require such consolation.

I am certain that by this time Mrs. Beringer knows as well as I that her play does not stand on the same level as her usual work; in showing the reasons I have fulfilled the critic's mission. No dulcet phrases will alter the judgment.

However, in spite of all faults, Mrs. Beringer gave Miss Esme Beringer an opportunity of showing some of her best qualities. "Some," in this case, is not limited praise; it serves merely to indicate that Miss Esme's talent is fit for great things. Her intensity is very telling, her manner singularly natural, she knows how to sink her own personality entirely in the character she plays, and it is no small task for a young and refined girl to impersonate a rough diamond such as Jim Belmont. Nor was she always equal to the demands of semi-polished vulgarity; her own feelings seemed to revolt against Jim's bad manners in the drawing-room, and thereby the incongruity

of the character became all the more glaring. That Miss Beringer has no singing voice is her misfortune not her fault; but I am astonished that she should be allowed to discount her success by attempting to sing where a stirring recitation would have done as well. Still, with these reservations Miss Esme Beringer is entitled to unqualified congratulation. She is one of the best among our young actresses, and already her record is one of which many an older woman might be proud. Yet Miss Beringer is rarely in harness, and managers do not send for her, although talent and brains are at a terrible premium among the young ladies on our stage. But these are mysteries which no outsider must attempt to solve. Talent alone is no longer a passport to the stage. If you do not believe it, look at the first page of the *Era*. See how many of the cleverest are "resting"—from getting nothing to do. Those advertisement columns are the veriest graveyard of forlorn ambitions.

WYNDHAM'S THEATRE: MRS. DANE'S DEFENCE,"

An Original Play, in Four Acts, by Henry Arthur Jones.

I.

"Mrs. Dane's Defence," is Miss Lena Ashwell's vindications of her claim to rank among the foremost of our contemporary actresses. Her performance in the third act is unforgettable, but from first to last she moulded the character with infinite perspicacity, and with a consistency akin to life itself.

All London will therefore acclaim the actress, and in the midst of the rapture, the author is likely to be relegated to the background. This should not be so, and if I venture to sound this warning note, it is not because I wish to dissent from the praise bestowed on Miss Ashwell, but in order to make it plain that much, in histrionic successes, is due to the author. We in England are apt to forget this; we print the actor's name in gigantic capitals, while the author's comes lower down in tiny letters; many among us who go to the theatre, know the whole playbill by heart except the name of the author. We are mostly not alive to the fact that the author creates, whereas the actor illustrates; that the very existence of the actor is dependent on the author. Sometimes it is the actor that makes the play, but as a rule it is the part that makes the actor. Miss Ashwell found such a part in Mrs. Dane, and Mr. Jones conceived it for her; the honours belong to them both and to Mr. Wyndham, whose impersonation of the judge was but one more finely-developed character-sketch in the exquisite gallery of his art.

· II.

The third act of Mr. Jones's play is as bold and intense a piece of work as has ever sprung from the prolific mind of this thoughtful dramatist. The great scene is almost primitive in manner—a mere dialogue such as may occur any day in our law-courts between counsel and witness. But with what consummate skill the “moral torture” is used by Mr. Jones to let us hear from Mrs. Dane's own lips that she has had liaison fraught with scandal; that she is not the widowed woman she pretends to be; that she is by the law of convention not a fit companion for the twenty-year-old son of the judge. It all began as suavely as a drawing-room conversation; every question was satisfactorily answered by Mrs. Dane; her lies were well told and made a plausible and harmonious story. Indeed, her battle was almost won, and even the sagacious inquirer felt sure of her innocence, when one little lapse of the tongue spelt perdition. She merely said “we” instead of “I,” thereby dragging into the inquiry factors which had hitherto been considered non-existent. The whole aspect of her part changed, as it were, through this solitary word, and, unexpected as the slip was, it led to vacillation, to hopeless hesitation, at last to an ignominious fall. The confidence of the judge once shaken, the *suaviter* changed into the *fortiter in modo*. Question upon question racked the unhappy woman, and the more she answered the worse she grew entangled. Miss Ashwell exhibited this disastrous ride for a fall with marvellous expression—less of voice than of countenance. Now hopeful, now defiant, now wavering, now despondent, with broken breath and restless, erring eyes, she met the charges of her torturer. It was as if the garotte closed round her neck, tighter and tighter and tighter, until, with one last twist when the judge said, “You are not Mrs. Dane, you are the other woman,” the soul of Mrs. Dane gasped her last, and the phantom of the past instantly took her place.

The effect of this scene is—without exaggeration—

colossal; at least such was the impression it made on me. I felt the moral torture so intensely, the cunningly devised phrases of the author, the insinuating force of Wyndham's dulcet manner, of his screwing, digging, exploding voice, the terrible mortified face of Miss Ashwell,—all that concentration of influence to destroy the new life of a woman!—it made me almost implore aloud for mercy. It was painful, physically as well as mentally. Yet I do not complain, for author and actors between them had but reproduced an episode of real life, and, in placing it before us, they had, if anything, softened its awful veracity.

III.

I wonder how Mr. Jones would have constructed this play, if our theatre were ruled by different conditions from those of the present day.

As the play stands, the third act alone is its *raison d'être*; all that precedes is but a lengthy preface of no very deep interest, and the conclusion is like a salon after the ball is over. In fact, as usual, Mr. Jones has been too explanatory at the start and at the finish. He evidently does not place great reliance on our intelligence, or, let me rather say, our quickness of perception. For, really, it was not at all necessary to create an anti-climax by clenching the long pending engagement between the judge and the charming Lady Eastney (nicely acted by Miss Moore), or by foreshadowing that, after all, the lovelorn juvenile wooer of Mrs. Dane would ere long be united to his bonnie Scotch lassie of less than twenty summers. We are not so dense as all that, and it worries us to have our noses bumped on the obvious.

Dealing more widely with the drama as a whole, I think that if Mr. Jones had not been conscious of writing for a commercial theatre, he would have left out much incident, cut out much (agreeable) cackle, and walked, in all the acts, in the broadway of life, instead of in the tangled lanes of the well-constructed play. There was no need for the slander of the scandal-loving Mrs. Porter; for the

employment of a private detective who made himself inordinately familiar with the judge, and made a fool of his client; for an enormous scaffolding of collateral situations, all of which tended to discount our belief in the much-vaunted cleverness of a judge in many ways modelled after the august figure of the late Chief Justice when he was Q.C.

I think that, if Mr. Jones, with whose gifts of observation and originality of conception one becomes more deeply impressed as play after play leaves his pen, had been untrammelled, he would have built his drama in three (not four) terse straightforward acts. He would have given the situation as it begins now: a woman, about whom one knows little or next to nothing, beloved by a man much younger—as is the fashion nowadays. Then, perfectly naturally, someone would have recognised her, communicated his discovery, and provoked an inquiry. Finally, the judge, who happens to be the lover's adopted father, would, unaided by detectives, documents and what not, but guided solely by his insight into human nature, have forced the secret out of her, and have convinced her of her unsuitability as a mate for his son. Silent departure of the woman would have been the end. Here was the groundwork of a great picture of human battles. A Hauptmann or a François de Curel would have worked on these lines, disregarding all that belongs to the "manufactured drama." But, alas! there is no home with us for the drama of life undefiled by considerations of exchequer. And thus Mr. Jones had to be content with pleasing himself in one act only, and the exigencies of the system in all the others.

Grave issues are touched upon in Mr. Jones's play, and grave words are uttered by the judge, when he pronounces the dread sentence of our conventional laws upon his victim. In his self-defence that it is not he who forbids the woman with a tainted past to enter into an honourable family, but "the hard law" that governs the life of our community, he refers to a question of immense moment. We might well ask, why is the past of a woman frequently

condoned when that woman is a great artist, a member of the aristocracy, or one of "no class" at all, and why is it irretrievable when she belongs to the middle class? We might go further and discuss whether the judge was right when he prognosticated a hell of unhappiness for his son if he married Mrs. Dane, supposing that a few years later a good-looking man came along, with possible consequences which one may guess. For does not the inner meaning of this supposition affect a widow as much as any other woman who enters wedlock unadorned by orange-blossoms? But the play merely throws up these questions, it does not answer them at all, or at least, only in a one-sided manner. We must, therefore, assume that the author had no intention to grapple with these great and grave issues, but that his sole idea was to write an entertaining play with a great part for Mr. Wyndham and a good one for a woman. This he has done, and, as it happens, it is the woman who gets the great part, and the actor obtains merely the second best. For, although in the play the judge scores to the detriment of the Magdalen, our sympathies are not with him, but with the sinner. Long after the curtain's fall she stands before us in her pallor, a tearful picture of love, and of the inexorable laws of convention which condones the past of men and is merciless to women.

CRITERION: "THE NOBLE LORD,"

An Original Farcical Comedy, in Three Acts, by
Robert Marshall.

October 21st, 1900.

I

It has come. It was inevitable that it should happen. Mr. Robert Marshall has at length tasted the mixed pickles of a loudly divided opinion, and he has his injudicious friends to thank for it. "His Excellency the Governor" was a clever little farce, but really no manifestation of genius; "The Broad Road" was an imperfectly constructed cross between Ibsen and old-fashioned English drama, but the Ibsenite touch pulled it through; "The Royal Family" was agreeable badinage, in the no less agreeable company of crowned heads behaving more or less like human beings, and therefore it pleased a good many people who love to look at a king. But the three plays together do not amount to very much; they had the advantage of seeing the light, instead of slumbering in their author's desk, as is the case with so much mediocre work that might be saved by good acting. There was perhaps some reason to hope for more mature work in Mr. Marshall's case, less artificial glamour of epigrammatic utterance and more human nature; but there was no occasion whatsoever for jubilating over the advent of a "new discovery." Yet that is precisely what occurred. Mr. Marshall's friends in the Press trumpeted as if a new Pinero or Jones had come to the front; the managers, ever

ready to lay hands on the advertised article of the moment, honoured Mr. Marshall with commissions; in discussions Grundy and Carton were frequently forgotten to make room for Captain Marshall. It must be a strong head which, regardless of such reckless admiration, can forge ahead steadily, concentrating all its power on the work in hand. And if Mr. Marshall has given way, if his latest play shows traces of superficial preparation, of hasty manufacture and premature delivery, it is not so much his fault as his misfortune, in having been placed on a pedestal before the foundations had been solidly cemented.

II

It is a hard thing I am going to say, but it is, nevertheless, a statement which should be made in the interests of all who intend to write for the stage. Everyone who has the slightest notion of dramatic form can write a play if he reads the halfpenny morning papers day by day, and if he has *The Times* volumes of *Punch* on his bookshelves. The former are full of sensational little stories, admirably adaptable to stage purposes; the latter contains such a mass of well-seasoned jokes that the fount is well-nigh inexhaustible, and a good selection warrants just so much laughter as is required for a three-act farcical comedy. Mind, I do not say that Mr. Marshall has borrowed from either; he has imagination, and I shall be the last to deny it; but what I wish to indicate is that the slovenly composition of "The Noble Lord," the epigrams, as painfully laboured as the oakum in a prison cell, the "tit-bit" form of the plot, are such as one would expect from a dilettante, but not from a craftsman.

Again, Mr. Marshall is a victim of circumstances. Ever since the days of Oscar Wilde our public has developed an unwholesome craving for epigrams, for "smart lines," for all that glittering stuff which is precious metal when it appears spontaneously, and tinsel when it is manufactured in order to make people laugh. We are ever as willing to listen and to laugh when a witty man's

words ripple from his lips, as we are soon tired when the would-be funny man strains every nerve to say "a good thing." Oscar Wilde was always witty; his good things were part and parcel of his nature, he coined them without effort *a la minute*. But his imitators made with the machine what the originator nimbly fancied without any apparent deliberation.

Now Mr. Marshall can at times be witty—he has proved it in his first farce; he proves it here and there in the dialogue of "The Noble Lord"; but, in his anxiety to satisfy the epigrammatic hunger, he introduces such a superabundance of forced verbal scintillation that the glitter becomes irritating.

III.

Even if the humours of the comedy had been more natural, the play as it stands would not have passed muster. In fact, it is only fair to say that the jokes, although they were unable to keep the third act afloat, kept the first two acts above water. The cardinal fault was a total absence of human nature, or if the word is too drastic for farcical comedy, of plausibility. There was just material enough for one act in the strange adventure of the rich heiress, beloved by the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Irish Leader, who set her principles above the dictates of her heart. It might have been an amusing curtain-raiser, for there is something piquant in the notion that a pretty woman's hand should be the prize of a successful pleading of her cause to the Parliamentary arena. But when once we know that the lady loves the Prime Minister, and that she merely trifles with the others to gain her ends, there is not much excitement in the development of the theme, unless the collateral incidents are so ingeniously welded together that the "chassez-croisez" game can be maintained until the end. And that is not the case in "The Noble Lord." In the first act all goes pretty well, but in the second ingenuity forsakes the author, repetitions of incidents occur, the fun

becomes forced, and even the old stupid trick of holding up the Irish member to something more than mere ridicule has to serve as a time-killer. Thus in the last act the rickety structure begins to totter, more repetitions deaden the interest of the audience, and when the crucial point (the *scène-à-faire*) is reached, the author capitulates. He does not unravel the tangle he has woven; he simply cuts the knots, and when the curtain falls we are precisely where we stood in the first act, when the lady clasped her arms round the neck of the Prime Minister, who, of the trio, was the only one who could possibly aspire to her hand.

I know very well that this is making short work of the play, but how can I help it? If I am to deal with a play exhaustively, there must be material—it may be good, indifferent or bad, but there must be something to grasp—a situation, a character, a scene or a typical moment. But I have found none such in this farcical comedy: the fun was not often exhilarating nor generally continuous enough; for a satire the political personages were all too flippantly drawn and too impossibly placed; and the love story itself was so curiously handled, the heroine not knowing her mind or heart for a single minute, that no one could have much interest in its protracted progress.

IV.

Mr. Marshall being a man of imagination, there were, of course, some opportunities for the actors to turn their talent to good account, but on the whole the chances were meagre, and evidently the task of the artists was a heavy one. Mrs. Charles Calvert had the lion's share of the "smart lines," and she spoke them with much adroitness and great assurance, so much so that one would beseech her not to turn her face all the time to the audience, whereby she estranges herself from her fellow-players. When many people utter epigrams, the whole thing savours soon enough of a public-school examination. It is the actors business to subdue this aspect, not to

emphasise it by parleying, as it were, on one's own account. Miss Ellis Jeffreys was as refined and as pleasant as possible in the character of the much-wooed lady. She was indeed a strange contrast to the three swains—the two Parliamentary Leaders and the Prime Minister—about whom there was very little dignity of demeanour and address, although at least both Messrs. Giddens and Weedon Grossmith creditably endeavoured to tone down the absurdity of the two personages. Miss Annie Hughes, in the part of a singularly obtrusive damsel made us forget that the young lady had scarcely enjoyed a careful education, and it was clear that, if the part had been better worked out, a great success would have fallen to her lot. But from beginning to end in this immature play there was something which indicated incompleteness, and when it was all over it seemed as if a rainbow bubble had been blown out until its overstrained texture gave way and burst into nothingness.

CORONET: CHARLOTTE WIEHE AND LA LOIE
FULLER.

Oct. 28th, 1900.

In these days of pills, soap, and star-actors, the light that is not duly kindled by the expensive oils of *réclame* will not only remain hidden under a bushel, but it runs the risk of being snuffed out. In other words, genius unspeakable might descend from heaven, and it would find a deaf ear in London, unless the fife and drum of paragraph and advertisement were to proclaim its fame. Madame Yacco, the Japanese tragedienne, was famous in Paris within twenty-four hours; in London, where she had the misfortune to make her *début* in Suburbia, she was greeted by a sceptic Press with lukewarm praise, while a few who spoke highly of her gifts had to endure no little chaff on account of their exotic predilections. Then after a week or so, London woke up, and the woman unknown, undiscussed, neglected yesterday, became a celebrity whose return is eagerly expected.

Will Frau Charlotte Wiehe, who, like Madame Yacco, made her first bow to London at the Coronet, be as fortunate as her predecessor, or will our public let her go, because the Press has not boomed her renown?

For Charlotte Wiehe, although her voice has not yet uttered a sound, is an actress of marvellous eloquence and expressiveness. She says so much with that mobile face of hers, with those graceful arms and hands, with those quaintly exquisite little feet—yes, she does speak with her feet—that we do not miss the words. All this

perhaps was not quite so apparent in the first mimodrama which she acted. For "L'Homme aux Poupées" is but a copy in miniature of Audran's famous comic opera, and it seems that in every company there is at least one lady who knows how to imitate the mechanical movements of wooden dolls. But in the next little piece, "La Main," we have real melodrama—a play as strong, as terse, and as piquant as one could well imagine. Almost every emotion was pressed into the part of the chanteuse who came home with her adorer, and, after his departure, saw in a looking-glass a burglar's hand creeping through the folds of the window-drapery. She had to be coquette, gay, coy, frivolous; then, while disrobing before retiring to rest, self-complacent, vain; suddenly, when she perceived the hand, astounded, incredulous, horror-struck, petrified; at last, as the lover came to the rescue, dazed, recovering, grateful; and last, but not least, overcome with love. Charlotte Wiehe accomplished everything contained in this string of adjectives, and that is why I chose them in preference to discursive details. She lived and agonised through that little play, and I felt the counterblast of every single phase of her emotions. It was a performance of great power, of artistic fineness, of wonderful observation. These twenty minutes of silent play and beautiful musical accompaniment (by H. Bereny) should suffice to create a lasting impression, to build a reputation. This *multum in parvo* impersonation adds the name of Charlotte Wiehe to the rolls of "Notable Players."

Sandwiched between the wordless plays were the graceful evolutions of La Loïe Fuller. If anything, the movements of this remarkable engineer of poetry in motion and in colour have become more fascinating than ever before. The muslin now waves through the floods of light without any apparent mechanical effort. It is a soft and bewitching performance, a picture of Oriental luxury and dreaminess. If La Loïe had lived in the days of the Arabian Nights, Sheherazade could have told her master one tale more than 1,001.

ROYALTY THEATRE; "MR. AND MRS. DAVENTRY,"

A New and Original Play in Four Acts, by
Frank Harris.

Oct. 28, 1900.

I.

This firstling of Mr. Frank Harris is a bold thing, and not a bad one either. This is no fare for the moralist, nor for Mrs. Grundy and her daughters. More, it is no fare for the recreation-hunter; it cannot please the antagonist of all serious mental occupation in the theatre.

In other words, if you like the diaphanous impropriety of "Self and Lady," the naked sincerity of "Mr. and Mrs. Daventry" cannot but incur your displeasure. For matters are not minced here, and in the race between marriage and liaison the illegitimate relationship proves stronger and nobler than the sanctified institution of the connubial shackles.

If Mr. Harris had been a more experienced playwright, this theme might have led him to write an epoch-making drama. The material is all there, but the method is immature. And thus, between these two stools, the play narrowly escaped failure.

However, a bad beginning gradually settled down to an earnest effort. As soon as the author had felt his ground, had loosened the reins of his thoughts, and spurred them onward to the goal, his grip on the unprejudiced part of the audience became firm, and the nearer the climax approached, the stronger became his hold. A man who can

do that may not be a playwright born, but he has undoubtedly in him that most indispensable of all gifts in a dramatist,—power of concentration—concentration of action, of thoughts, of language.

Incidentally I have spoken of the unprejudiced part of the audience, and it is perhaps necessary to explain this expression. There was gossip in the house on the occasion of the first performance. It was freely circulated that Mr. Harris had but lent his name to another man's deed. They said that Oscar Wilde had built the scenario, had written the play. That sufficed to poison the atmosphere. And when, during the first two acts, there was a bountiful display of those pyrotechnics which were the charm and the weakness of the author of "The Importance of Being in Earnest," the animosity towards the originator of the play assumed a form which almost spelt disaster. The turn of the tide came when Mr. Harris, one of our masters of the short story, spoke in his own language; as soon as the lengthy exposition—*à la* Sardou—and the epigrammatic ammunition—both superfluous—had been exhausted, and the drama began in earnest, the attitude of the house changed, and when the curtain fell for the last time not a few eyes were moist with tears.

II.

It is no use palliating the plot with pretty words. Mr. and Mrs. Daventry's story is a "drama of adultery," as the French would call it. Both parties break the marriage vows, but for the husband there is no other excuse except the usual one that he is a man; while the wife from the first has our sympathy and compassion. He is a brute; the sort of well-dressed ruffian you may encounter any day in Sir Francis Jeune's court; a wife-beater, whose weapons are moral torture instead of the fist. She is a picture of refinement, and, hard as he has tried, he has not succeeded in subduing her nature. When, at length, he introduces scandal into the house, makes love to his guest's wife in the unsuspected presence of his own; when

detection is imminent, and only averted by the intervention of the ill-used hostess (a scene worthy of Sardou's most cunning *coup de théâtre*), the rupture is final. For Mrs. Daventry had only remained under the domestic roof because honour and convention dictated so; in her heart of hearts she loved another, and to that other man she flees for consolation. But Mr. Daventry, as fate will have it, goes to him too, and we now face the novel situation of a prospective lover faithfully interpreting the husband's plea for reconciliation, and being rewarded for his loyalty by the wife's unconditional offer of her whole being, body and soul.

How it all ends; how the husband is removed from the scene; how the woman vindicates her attitude in a speech as beautifully worded as it is powerfully convincing, there is no need here to explain. It is not in the plot that the value of this play lies, it is in the treatment of the crucial question: was this woman justified in doing what she did? "No," says the moralist, "for, however much she had been sinned against, she had no right to sin. By her surrender she rules herself out of court." But, viewed from the broader point of view of humanity, of human imperfection, and taking into consideration every circumstance, notably that the husband had made every effort to crush all that was noble and exalted in the character of his wife, by merely using her as a thing to toy with and to torment, the woman and her conduct stand before us in a different light. She is no common adulteress, not one who forsakes duty under the spell of passion, but a poor victim, cornered by circumstances, driven into the protecting arms of the man she really loves, lest, in her misery, she should seek refuge in the greater sin of suicide. I do not know how others felt when the drama gradually rivetted the attention of the spectators, but in my case a world of ideas seemed to be engendered by the play. And I was deeply impressed by this vivid crystallisation of the multitude of divorce-court dramas which day after day reopen the eternal, and as yet unanswered, question: "Is marriage a failure?"

III

The faults of Mr. Frank Harris's play may be many, but its good qualities, if not so numerous, are greater than its shortcomings. We have here an author who, after a little scouting, tells his story forcibly, graphically, and on the whole with singular directness. When he knows his *métier* a little better, he will scorn the interludes of comic waiters, who discount his effects, and are useless in the picture. For, when a man is as boldly original, as fertile in thoughts, as Mr. Harris, he can afford to throw overboard all that ballast which belongs to the cargo of the conventional drama. We are willing to listen to an author who has something to say, and instead of chiding him for his courage, as has been done in this case, we should encourage him to forge ahead in his own way, regardless of all purely theatrical considerations. In other words, Mr. Harris will win his place as a playwright if he severs his connections with Sardou and all the other clever craftsmen to whose school he does not belong. If he must follow suit until he can rely entirely on his own methods, let him lean on Ibsen, on the young men of France, of Germany, who have broken and shattered the idols which our public is still told to adore. In Mrs. Patrick Campbell he has an excellent helpmate; she, too, breaks away from conventions, and in this play she has acted with more genuine feeling than ever before. Her Mrs. Daventry is the truest woman in her gallery, truer than Magda, greater than Paula Tanqueray. She was very ably seconded by Mr. Fred Kerr, who played the brute to the life, and, disregarding his own success, threw every grain of sympathy into the scale of the woman. Mr. Du Maurier, too, handled his part with much discretion, although he is by no means an ideal stage lover. The waiters of Messrs. Gran and Arliss were intensely amusing, if entirely uncalled for. About most of the other characters the least said the better. Some of the ladies gave a sorry exhibition of brainlessness, and, if the epigrams in the first part missed fire, it was less the fault

of the author than that of his interpreters. Such inharmonious babbling would mean death to the wittiest of plays, and it is no small wonder that "Mr. and Mrs. Daventry" survived it.

/

“HEROD,” BY STEPHEN PHILLIPS.

Nov. 4th, 1900

I

None came to scoff, and all remained to lend an encouraging hand to the new dramatist. It was one of those momentous occasions when every lover of dramatic literature, every pleader for a drama higher in form and deeper in thought than the usual product, enters the theatre with feelings of nervous expectation. A success may mean a revolution for the good—a renewed belief in the woefully neglected plays of contemporary poets; a lukewarm reception may perpetuate a deplorable *status quo*; a distinct failure would mean that, for a long time to come, the leading managers would fight shy of a species of play in which there was no reward of any kind.

The cloud of uncertainty did, however, not hang long over the house; when we had got through the preliminary canter of scenic display, accompanied by clarions and orchestral strains; when the actors had received their inevitable receptions, and the author, like most people who are nerving themselves for public speech, had traversed his somewhat lengthy introduction, it soon became clear that the tale to be unfolded would fascinate and hold its hearers then and for many days to come. This early assumption was all the more audacious since, from the first, it was palpable enough that the actors did not stand on the level of their task, and that a work of lesser dramatic force (to leave poetry out of the question)

would have succumbed to the inequality and monotony of the speakers. But the acting will be dealt with further on; for the present it is sufficient to say that Mr. Stephen Phillips has not fallen away from the power which made "Paolo and Francesca" an unequalled success as a poem in the book-market, and has in "Herod" revealed a dramatic power which qualifies him a welcome member in that smallest of all our clubs, "Our Dramatists."

II

Successful as the tragedy is—for, although the author in his modesty has not ventured to call it thus, it is tragedy—it would be unwise and untrue to apply the now somewhat commonplace words of "great" and "masterpiece." Even in the joyful moment when an artistic victory in our theatre quickens the pulse, it behoves us too see things in their right proportion; and to proclaim that "Herod" is a play that would make a man and an epoch, would be a disservice to the author, whose over-exaltation of to-day might be cruelly disappointed when riper reflection took the place of enthusiasm. Nor can I conscientiously venture to give a definite opinion on the value of his poetry. I have not read the play, and the ear is often a deceiver; nor yet have I heard the play, as I should wish to hear it, for only the infinitesimal minority of the actors had any conception of how to handle proselike, yet rhythmical, rhymeless verse. I was repeatedly struck by notes of singular beauty, by imagery as vividly coloured as the skies of that very Jerusalem which we saw from the terrace of Herod's palace. But it would be insincere on my part if I confessed to having heard the voice of the Muse, or to having been carried away by winged words never to be forgotten. All that may be there. In the reading it may spring out like the waters that gurgle beneath the earth and untowardly flash out in a wayside spring; but the human voice revealed it not. It shewed grace, stateliness, richness of vocabulary and colour, but somehow the enjoyment

derived was only intellectual. The heart did not throb, there was not that hushing of the breath, that feeling of sympathetic alertness in the audience, that comes only when a great poet gives us of his best.

Was the drama at fault? Was the story frigid, devoid of human interest, not wholly tragic? By no means. The drama was not only free from commonplace, it was pathetic and intense. But at times the author straggled. We were not fully satisfied with the necessity of the doom of Queen Mariamne's brother. We saw no convincing reasons for the diabolical hatred of Herod's mother and sister towards his proud and lovable queen. We considered Mariamne's execution untimely, since for the king there was no conclusive proof of her intent to kill her master. But by a singular adroitness in drawing together the threads of the story just as they threatened to escape his hold, Mr. Stephen Phillips succeeded in filling the gaps and redeeming the superfluity of wasted dialogue by a sudden return to the main theme, the passion of Herod for Mariamne,

A more experienced dramatist would have divided the material of characterisation with more judgment between the king and Mariamne. He would have avoided in the one case making the queen a well nigh passive personality, while drawing the king in all his ambitions, his passion and his Eastern impetuosity. For the king alone over-reaches everyone, not only in the completeness of psychical equipment, but also in the fluency of his address. The king alone speaks more than all the other characters together, and the result of this uneven distribution is that the king pulverises his surroundings, not so much by his grandeur of mind as by his grandiloquence of tongue. It would be a serious defect in a play of less interest, and to a certain extent it stands in the way of the development of the tragedy itself. Until the end of the second act we are not quite in sympathy with the monarch, bluff and blustering, devoured alike by ambition and by desire for the woman. He protests too much, and while, as it were, we learn to know

him to the innermost of his being, we remain strangers towards Mariamne, towards the Queen-mother and her daughter, and towards Gadias the counsellor, who has the mask, and in a measure, the manner of Beaconsfield. Yet in certain moments there reigned perfect equality, and the scene in which Herod, home from the wars, relates the splendour of his exploits, ostensibly to the crowd, but in fact to Mariamne, is powerful by its very peculiarity. Marmiane knew that the king had caused the murder of her brother; as a queen she had to do her duty, and she stood in the great hall of the palace to receive him. But she stood there like a figure of marble. She listened, but she did not respond. He took her by the hand, but she did not tender it. He courted her admiration, but she gave no sign. He sought her approval, her lips, her embraces, but she was lifeless in his arms, and when at last she moved, it was to shrink from him. Then Herod felt it all. Murder was out, love gone for ever.

There are more such touches in the play which point to a great dramatic instinct, but the climax of the author's power is reached in the third act, when, after the death of Mariamne, Herod's mind is stricken. The whole act is purely a monologue, illustrated, intensified by the movements and the shrieks of the crowd, who simulate belief in his sanity. The king is now but a slave to his passion for Mariamne. He scatters jewels about—for her; he promises bounties to the people—for her; he sends messenger after messenger to her! and every fresh message invented to beguile him leads to love-lorn musings, and in turn to wild ravings and childish play with his jewels and his baubles. This delineation of madness is grandiose. At length, when every device to soothe his yearnings is exhausted, when the courtiers feel that the terrible truth must be told, the bier is brought, and the cold touch of the lifeless body reveals that which words dare not express. Slowly the crowd disperses, leaving the mad sovereign in awful solitude. Without, bugles announce the advent of soldiers, and a herald brings the tidings that Herod's greatest dream of glory is realised. Henceforth, by the

grace of Rome he is King of Arabia. But he hears it not; motionless he remains standing before the bier—a living corpse facing death.

III

Alas that we have no tragedians to act such a play! But that is the truth. With the single exception of Sir Henry Irving there is not one actor among us who has the magic power to vivify the great pictures of the past; and among our actresses the dearth is absolute. And that is not the full tale of our poverty. We are practically unequipped for the interpretation of poetic drama. Good intentions are plentiful, but there is no schooling, no method, no style. Blank verse is prose in the mouths of most of our players, and even harmony of elocution is utterly wanting. Some recite their lines in the modern airy fashion of drawing-room plays; some "oh-and-ah" and sigh and sob at every opportunity offered by the text; some rant at the slightest provocation, and thereby rend not only the air and our ears but also their own precious vocal organs, all of which goes to prove that our actors are not made by education (to say nothing of "by birth"), but by routine. So forcibly did the foibles of our system come to the fore that the calm, deliberate, and, I would call it, urbane manner of Mr. Somerset as Gadias, seemed to be out of place, while by common consent he was the only one who entered into the spirit of his part without "under-acting" or exaggeration. Next to him Miss Bateman (Mrs. Crowe) and Miss Eleanor Calhoun proved that they understand the note of tragedy, but, whether it was due to the excitement of the occasion or other reasons, even these ladies at times strained their voices to excess and roared with thundering passion, where quiet impressiveness would have more surely hit the mark.

In the case of Mr. Tree the inclination to overtax his vocal powers was very evident, but, in a measure, excusable. Mr. Tree, who looked every inch the Eastern King, has neither the physical attributes nor the vocal breadth

of a tragedian. His dignity is splendid; his demeanour truly regal; his address, when deliberate, unemotional, mordant, strikes home like the blade of a sword. In moments of limited vehemence he is particularly telling, wherefore in the third act the exhibition of insanity was fairly overwhelming and always impressive. But in the episodes where the emotions had to come from the heart, where love and passion, whipped into fury, had to run a wild and interminable race, there the effort was greater than the achievement. Mr. Tree interested, but did not touch us. We admired the immensity of his energy and the loftiness of his conception, but he did not carry us away. It was acting, not living. The true ring was absent because his physical powers were unable to supplement the endeavours of his intellect. For all that, Mr. Tree has enhanced his reputation by this impersonation. Irving would have scarcely succeeded in it, owing to the irremediable cause of his years; and since Mr. Tree is our most powerful actor next to the chief, it was right that he should undertake the part.

With regard to Miss Maud Jeffreys, I cannot now express a final opinion. Undoubtedly on this side of the Atlantic Miss Julia Neilson is the only actress who would have been expected to do justice to the part. Failing her, the choice of Miss Jeffreys was a good one, since all agree that in this artist there is a great deal of latent power which has hitherto been indicated but not brought out. Nor was the première of "Herod" a crucial test. Miss Jeffreys looked beautiful, she strained every nerve and every muscle; her silence was at times vastly dramatic, but she seemed not to be herself, she was often inaudible and seldom distinct. In body Mariamne was all there, but the interpreter of the soul, the voice, did not carry us away; and thus the character stood before us more like a picture than a living individuality.

In spite, then, of many things, the tragedy succeeded beyond our expectation, and has added to our literature, and to the lustre of Mr. Tree's record as a manager. But the happiest reflection of all is that the public greeted the

play with a heartiness almost boundless in its enthusiasm. That augurs well for the future, and proves conclusively that it is by no means futile to work with all one's love and might for the elevation of our stage.

STAGE SOCIETY: "THE THREE WAYFARERS,"

A Legendary Trifle in One Act by Thomas Hardy.

"MACAIRE,"

A Melodramatic Farce in Three Acts, by W. E. Henley
and R. L. Stevenson.

November 11, 1900.

I.

During the entr'acte at the Great Queen Street Theatre, where the Stage Society gave its first matinée, a lady said to me: "But suppose you had not known that 'The Three Wayfarers' was written by Thomas Hardy, what would you and, for the matter of that, everybody else have said about it?" Declining to see any insinuation in the question, but simply a tribute to our reverence for a famous man, I replied: "Precisely what I say now, what I said eight years ago when Mr. Charrington gave, at Terry's Theatre, a more finished performance of it than the present. You remember, it was on that disappointing occasion when five English novelists and journalists were tried, and four found wanting. Mr. Thomas Hardy's playlet alone wiped out the bad record of the evening. It succeeded, not because it is a flawless dramatic structure, well timbered and well finished off (for the hand of the amateur was all too obvious), but because it was dramatic by the very weirdness of its invention." Atmosphere—I should

have continued, if the bell had not then recalled us to our seats—is the one thing which an author must know how to create, if he hopes for success behind the footlights. The best Sidney-Grundyite construction—a thing which follows the dramatic catechism as closely as if it were gospel—cannot save a play, if the atmosphere is not there. That is why Grundy's own "Debt of Honour," with its magnificent second act, failed as soon as the author changed the atmosphere. But a play may be ever so poor in craft so long as it possesses that indefinable something which, like the thin haze that dims and beautifies a landscape, exercises from the outset a magic influence on the auditorium.

Now, in the "Wayfarers," a mere fragment that would seem to be the opening chapter of a thrilling book, the atmosphere is dominant as soon as the curtain rises. They are singing and dancing in the village tavern, and, while outside the snow is hunted by the wind, and within the fiddle croaks a minuet, a pale, haggard, ragged fellow enters. His features show anguish—he is an escaped sheep-stealer, for whom the gallows is waiting. Then another fellow enters, big and burly, and he carries a bulky bag. He looks a sinister customer, with his black hair and his wild eyes. He frightens the peasantry; he might be Beelzebub himself. The fugitive opposite scents mischief and battles with his emotions. Drink humours the sinister wayfarer to dance, and, to enhance the gaiety, he draws from his bag a hempen cord, which in jest he flings round the neck of the poor devil opposite him. You can imagine the scene: anguish on the one side, terror and dismay amongst the dancers and the shrieking maidens, and in the midst of it all the hangman heavily clogging his hornpipe, with the rope of justice whirling over all their heads. It is somewhat gruesome, no doubt, and, in spite of the development which follows, not exactly a play in the accepted sense of the word. Mr. Hardy himself calls it a "legendary trifle." But, all said and told, the man who can handle a crowd

without betraying the screws and the cog-wheels of his mechanism, and who can put into a small mould a great deal of intensity, has dramatic instinct, and his success as a novelist is so much loss to the stage.

The public performance of the Stage Society evoked but little enthusiasm, contrary to what happened in 1892. Perhaps the dance-macabre-like tone of the little panel discomforted the fair sex, which was in overwhelming majority in the house. Personally I felt less fascinated than in the past, not because Mr. Charrington's performance of the hangman had deteriorated—it is, in fact, the finest thing he has ever done—but on account of the want of *ensemble* in the performance. There is sometimes an air of slovenliness about these performances of the Stage Society—of slipshod rehearsing, which destroys the unity of the picture. No one is better aware of the difficulties attending free-lance theatres than I, but careful stage management, painstaking drilling of inexperienced members, can do a great deal; and, for instance, in the case of the sheep-stealer, who practically holds the whole interest of the play in conjunction with the hangman, the effect would have been much greater if the young actor had been made aware of the great peril of his position, and the absolute necessity of revealing this constantly by his awe-struck and terrified face. The actor realised little of this, and thereby the play, through no fault of the author, lost a good deal of its grip.

II

The next and longest part of the programme was "Macaire," a three-act melodramatic farce by W. E. Henley and R. L. Stevenson. Everybody who reads the books of literary men is acquainted with this play, which appeared in the same volume as "Beau Austin" and "Admiral Guinea." Since the latter two have been acted, with but indifferent success it is true, it seems reasonable

to ask why this play of "Macaire" has been slumbering during so many years in cold print. And for once I, who am never slow to chide our managers for want of enterprise, entirely endorse their policy of masterly inactivity. For "Macaire," product of two distinguished *litterateurs* though it may be, is not a good play, and it has not even a *raison d'être*. Irving some ten years ago produced an adapted version of a melodrama, "L'Auberge des Adrets," which Frederic Lemaitre has immortalised by his creation of Robert Macaire. That play, fairly demolished by our critics, was not the fruit of literature. It was but the skilful theatrical manufacture of a practised craftsman. But it was in its unpretentious way exceedingly powerful and not a little adroit. The effect which it produced was honest goose-flesh, and not a doubtful sensation flavoured with fine writing. Macaire and Bertrand were both finished scoundrels, and each of them had a fairly elaborately moulded character of his own. But in the Henley-Stevenson play there is Macaire and nothing but Macaire. He does and he talks; he is the drama and the dramatis personæ all rolled into one; the others, including Bertrand, are but second fiddles. They are the weak orchestration of theme, interesting in itself, but, take all the other characters away and let Macaire declaim alone—in the manner of the stage production of the poem "La Grève des Forgerons," by Coppée—and you have just as much drama as you had before.

Macaire is indeed a finely-conceived character, and in his copious speech there is often that felicity of expression which we are wont to associate with the two authors. But the incidents which are grouped around the great central figure are not interesting enough to sustain the expansion of three acts. Thus towards the middle of the second act the play becomes wearisome, and, once the spell is broken, there is no rally until the very last scene. Here we have a touch of real dramatic force. Macaire has been shot by a gendarme, and it is his tool, the fool Bertrand, who tenderly bends over the dead body and bemourns the departure of his evil genius; for a moment something

like character appears in the mass of dough which is called Bertrand. For the rest, the farcical element is tame, and the melodramatic feeble. At best the play is a suitable, if excessive, frame for the character of Macaire ; but, notwithstanding the literary value revealed by the performance, it pales by the side of the French melodrama. And, indeed, if I did not know that the authors have no need of borrowed plumes, it would be justifiable to call "Macaire" an amplified decalcomania of Lemaitre's own particular melodrama.

Nov. 18th, 1900.

SUDERMANN'S NEW PLAY.

I.

The first night of "St. John's Fire" ("Johannisfeuer") at the Lessing Theater in Berlin raised hope and storm. Two acts were admirable, and promised something as beautiful and pathetic as "Das Glueck im Winkel." Then all of a sudden, while the plaudits of the audience were still vibrating through the house, the atmosphere changed—either the author had lost his way or the audience theirs. Anyhow, it was felt that things were going wrong, and when once that feeling is abroad it is almost beyond human force to restore the balance. After the third act—intensely dramatic as it was—the friends of Sudermann endeavoured to uphold their standard against the opposition which showed fight; but when the fourth act came to an end, destroying that which had been laboriously built up at the beginning of the evening, the staunchest supporters had to succumb, and artistically, if in no other sense, the failure of "Johannisfeuer" was an indisputable fact.

At the first glance one is disposed to accept these first-night verdicts as extremely untrustworthy. For, if in London the public errs unmistakably on the side of leniency, in Berlin draconic severity is the order of the day. When a man is successful in Berlin, there is a tendency not only to dispute his laurels, but to make the next wreath so dear to earn that many prefer to seek the verdict of the provinces instead of the hall mark of the capital. And Sudermann has ere this experienced the

strange sensation of being acclaimed in Vienna and Dresden, while on the same evening in Berlin he has had to face, after an auspicious start, the ill-will of a dissatisfied audience. This happened when "The Battle of the Butterflies" was produced, and it occurred again when "St. John's Fire" was born four weeks ago. Since then the play has appeared in print, and in a few days an eager public, anxious to compare the judgment of the first-nighters with their own, have swallowed no less than ten editions.

For once I should have liked to see what went on in the brains of these thousands of readers who had no opportunity of witnessing the performance, and had to be content with fire-side study and their own imagination. Did they, I wonder, start the perusal with a great prejudice in favour of the distinguished author? Did they live with, and enjoy, the picture of opulent rural life in that far-away province of Prussia? Did they—as the middle of the third act was reached—feel a blight which lessened interest, produced impatience, and kindled anger? Did they, I wonder, finally lay the book aside with that shrug of the shoulders which expresses: I do not comprehend? That is what I did, and I have read the play several times—act by act—but I feel no "forrader"; what it is all about I know well, but as to the drift of the story, the inner meaning, I am hopelessly fogged.

II.

Once a year a survival of Paganism still rules supreme in West Prussia. Once a year the St. John's fires burn on the hill-tops, and there reigns licence. Then, when the flames leap sky-high, wild desires awake in the human breast, and, like the fire, burst all bounds. In the farmhouse of Mr. Vogelreuter there are at least two in whose breasts live unfulfilled wishes, and fate so rules it that on this St. John's night the spirit's willingness is one with the weakness of the flesh. George, the farmer's foster-son, is betrothed to his daughter, a good match as they go in the

country, but not a mate for the young man's character. His hand is hers, but not his heart, for that belongs to Marikke, a vagrant gipsy's daughter, whom Vogelreuter had picked up years ago on a night errand. For Marikke is all that man can desire, a perfect Hausfrau, with a refined mind of her own, a wife in the fullest sense of the word. Long she had loved George, long she had kept aloof from him; after all, how could they think of marriage, these two—"the children of poverty"? And so George had done that which so many do: he had become betrothed to the silly little baby-girl with the money-bags, and left the other to the proffered affections of the clergyman, whom Marikke esteemed, but could not love. In the lonesomeness of her heart Marikke feels a desire to see her mother, the old vagrant addicted to drink; she yearns for somebody to love, and her forlorn hopes are centred on that woman. She beseeches George to bring her mother to her, and after much persuasion, he gives in. The disenchantment is horrible; the woman is not only in drink and asking for more, but she even commits a petty theft when she talks to her daughter. The interview is fatal to Marikke; she feels that there is but one kindred soul to her, and that is George, and henceforth she belongs to him with all her being.

At this juncture we reach the real climax of the play. The author now stands before us like a baccarat-player; one single card makes or undoes the game. Sudermann had the choice of making Marikke and George revolt against their surroundings, when they would have thrown over home and comfort to seek their fortune elsewhere, fortified in the possession of their love; or he could have let them seek the freedom of St. John's night, with an inevitably tragic issue. But neither happens—at least, not in the logical form we are led to expect from an adept of the realistic school. Indeed, after much fine talk, such as we got to perfection in the days of Alexandre Dumas fils, when the "raisonneur" knew remedies for every conflict, George and Marikke, intoxicated by St. John's fire and, perhaps, to some extent by the wine-bowl, have their way; indeed,

they afterwards repent, and talk in turn of self-destruction, sacrifice, and a life-long union. But in the end George thinks better of it, follows his moneyed fairy to the registrar, and leaves Marikke behind to fight her own battle.

III.

What irritates one particularly in this strangely uneven play is the fact that so fine a character as Marikke is so wantonly thrown away on a weak vessel like George. At first, when we hear the fellow talk and brave the strong will of his future father-in-law, we grow fond of him. What a fine man, we think; what a fit counterpart to Marikke! How boldly he will sever his bondage and relinquish all earthly goods and chattels for the sake of his love! And the more we see and hear of the couple, the more do we long for the third act, which is to indicate the course of life in store for these two. Even when George extols the traditions of the St. John's customs more in the manner of a French *comédie-de-salon* hero than in the sober language of the hardy North German, we do not lose faith in him. Presently, we assure ourselves, he will tell bride and uncle to mind their own business, and take his Marikke's arm to wander into the wide, wide world. But George does not know his own mind, and his vacillation is infectious; the surrender of the girl and all that follows is but commonplace business, tinged with sentimentousness, with a dash of symbolism and a slight allusion to heredity (*à la Ibsen*). It reads all very well, and no doubt on the stage it will sound well, and beguile the spectator who is easily taken in by fine language and just that little air of thoughtfulness which covers intrinsic poverty of ideas. But if one pauses to apply all this to the touchstone of nature, it is soon seen how poor is the alloy of would-be realism and theatrical manufacture.

Of all the characters not one survives the ordeal of closer examination except the clergyman, who loves Marikke in his simple evangelical manner, as in "*Das Glueck Im Winkel*" the husband loved his wife, "because he felt that

she had slipped and wanted staying." This parson, with his adorable touch of humanity, his undogmatic dispensing of Christian love, his warm, unaffected words, that seemed to spread like a shelter over the lonely soul of Marikke, is a fine chip of the old block. He ranks with Heffterdinck (Magda) and George (Das Glueck) among the finest creations of Sudermann. In fact, the parson is a spiritual brother of these two, who, like most of the characters in Sudermann's plays, bear unmistakeable traces of affinity. Only, after starting work in his usual method, and developing the ancestral tree of his *dramatis personæ* (which faintly recalls the Rougon-Macquart series of Zola), Sudermann has this time left his usual track midway. Was it because he did not know what to do with George and Marikke when he had brought them together in the second act? Was it because, having harped so often on the same strings, he has reached the stage of exhaustion with which he is reproached in Germany? I do not know, and can only conjecture; the author alone can supply the explanation. From the reader's point of view I can but testify to strangely mixed feelings, to some enjoyment and a great deal of perplexity, and what the spectator will say we shall learn anon when the play is produced by the German Theatre of London. For, whatever may be the faults of Sudermann's latest work, it is perfect in stagecraft, and the superiority of its style, which towers above the majority of contemporary plays, discounts the risk of failure before an impartial audience.

DUKE OF YORK'S: "THE SWASHBUCKLER,"

A Romantic Comedy, in Four Acts, by L. N. PARKER.

November 18th, 1900

This time our sympathy should be with Mr. Parker, and the first-nighters treated him ungenerously, to say the least of it. It is never kind to break a butterfly—for the play was no more than that—nor is it generous to rail at the innate shortcomings of a man when he does his best. And we all know, after having seen about a score and four of Mr. Parker's plays, that, earnest and talented as he is, he cannot write the last act—the *acte à faire*. Why, then, hoot him for one act out of four, when at least two have given much pleasure, and the third could fairly pass muster with a few vigorous strokes of the pencil? It is this sort of mixed reception that will discourage an author from giving free rein to his fancy, and drive him back to hack-work, which is always safe, for the very reason of its low standard.

Of course it is always more or less risky to work on a theme already made famous, and, since Shakespeare has written "As You Like It," there is not much justification for trying to bring this story more or less up to date. But, after all, others have done it with impunity, notably Mr. Anthony Hope in "Ursula," so there is no just cause why Mr. Parker should not have a fling at the lady masquerading in male attire. In the beginning the experiment seemed to succeed very well, too; the first act of "The Swashbuckler" was pretty and amiable. We liked the dashing warrior, who after innumerable love

affairs, had forsworn women, yet almost immediately got entangled anew in the snares of Eve. We also liked the three "funny dogs" who played chorus to his blustering. And when the sweet lady herself came on the scene, and by the mere sound of her voice conquered the heart of the blindfolded swordsman, we drifted pleasantly with the author into that fairyland where hearts are trumps, and would-be human ignorance is bliss.

Thus things went on amidst much billing and cooing, to the accompaniment of green leaves and glittering stars, mild fun, and the language of rose water and honey. It was the very thing for Yule-tide, when the kiddies go to the play and laugh consumedly while munching sugar-plums and butter-scotch. But there was too much sweet-stuff to please the sterner race of playgoers; they seemed to feel at a certain point that the author was "played out"—that he had exhausted his subject, and was trying to humour his audience with rosewater and honey *ad infinitum*. That broke the spell; before the third act, which was diffuse and straggling, had come to a close, a feeling of indigestion overcame the house, and then people became restless, with the usual result. It was a pity, for the story had charm, and the treatment was in many ways delicate and poetic. As a libretto to a tuneful comic opera it would have achieved a great success. One longed for orchestration and arias all the time, instead of which one heard talk, talk, talk, a profuse clattering of arms, swashbuckling with a vengeance, but nothing that went deeper. In a word, there was too much fancy, too little backbone, and on fancy alone no play can live, any more than can a married couple on love and air.

This want of depth was unfortunately accentuated by the acting, for, with the exception of Mr. Herbert Waring and Messrs George Shelton, F. H. Tyler, and J. Willis—the three very funny "funny dogs"—no one displayed that "panache" which is the paramount demand of romantic comedy. The part of the Swashbuckler's sweetheart, which was assigned to Miss Evelyn Millard, was perhaps not a very great one from the point of view of a

leading lady. But an actress in the best sense of the word could and should have made a great deal of it. The fact that Miss Millard was merely winsome and girlish—gifts for which nature, not the artist, is to be praised—proved that she did not realise the possibilities of the character. If she had entered into the spirit of it, she would have been the central figure of the play, for we men are always on the woman's side if we possibly can be. As it happened, however, Mr. Waring drove Miss Millard entirely into the background. He bore not only the title of the play, he carried the very play itself. He was fine, manly, breezy; he "swashed" and he "buckled;" he fought the author's battle and his own; when he lifted his sword and his voice, he raised the whole tone of his surroundings, and created that atmosphere of romance which never fails to conquer the most *blasé* of playgoers.

To Mr. Waring, then, belonged the honours of the evening, and if all his fellow players had stood on the same plane, the laudable effort of the author would no doubt have received a better reward.

ST. JAMES'S THEATRE: "THE WISDOM OF THE
WISE,"

A New and Original Comedy in Three Acts by John
Oliver Hobbes.

Nov. 25th, 1900

I.

The first night of "The Wisdom of the Wise" was a long series of blunders. The play was brilliant but blundering; it was a blunder on Mrs. Craigie's part to answer an equivocal "author's call"; it was a more serious blunder on the part of the gallery to forget the respect due to a woman. It was—lastly, but most emphatically—exceedingly indiscreet of Mr. George Alexander to bandy words with the opposition. Instead of calming the seething waters, it whipped them into fury, and for once a popular manager had to submit to severe castigation; because he attempted to stifle that which is perfectly legitimate—the right of expressing a candid opinion at the *end* of the performance. For let it be recorded that the audience behaved exceedingly well until the curtain fell for the last time, and that the only incident of importance during the evening was a suppression of exuberant applause after the second act. When, however, the last act again fell below expectations, there was some protest against the appearance of the authoress, and if the wise had practised wisdom, Mrs. Craigie would have remained in her box and Mr. Alexander would have kept silence. So much for the demonstration.

The next point is, was it justified? Did the authoress and the manager who produced the play deserve the censure which was more lavishly bestowed on them than the applause of their friends? I should say "no" in either case, but qualify it slightly with regard to Mr. Alexander, who was responsible for the production. There are radical faults in this comedy (about which I shall speak later) which no manager could ever modify, since they are, as it were, birthmarks; but especially ought an experienced stage-craftsman to have seen at the very first rehearsal, that the play is too long by half, and that the loss of much talk would have been a distinct gain. Of course, I do not know what goes on behind the scenes of our theatres; but I can hardly conceive that Mrs. Craigie, who is yet a novice in the drama, would have opposed a careful modification of her dialogue. Perhaps it would have even been better if the play had been altogether denied the stage and relegated to the realm of book-drama. But that is a tardy after-thought; the play has been done, and we have to take it for better or for worse.

II.

When people talk so much, it is not always easy to follow the drift of their effusions. So I am not quite sure that I am right in believing that "The Wisdom of the Wise," purports to teach a little lesson to young wives—a lesson which, being a man, I crystallise conveniently into, "Trust and love your husband, and let the world talk." But, as I say, I may be wrong; there may be no lesson at all; there may be fifty in the play for aught I know, for every character rode a little didactic hobby-horse of his or her own, and in that strangely mixed race I lost my bearings. There seemed to be but one among all the figures in this domestic picture who stood outside the ceaseless batteries of epigram and society "chiffons" that made the evening burdensome,

and this was the little Duchess of nineteen, just wed, still virginal in the innocence and the immensity of her love. She was bewildered by all that went on around her; by the flippancy of talk and theory; by the unwholesome lessons of marital demeanour that were poured into her ears by envious lady friends; by the prospect that her husband, the Duke, might one day concentrate his thoughts on something—maybe somebody—else than herself. And credulous, I would fain say stupid, as the authoress had made this little Duchess, she is the only real character in the play; and the scenes with her husband, in which she toys with the new theories that have been taught her, are of a charm and a sweetness more than welcome in this wilderness of talk. Mrs. Craigie is happiest in her love scenes, and when she does not fritter them away, as unfortunately occurs in the third act, between the Duchess's friend and her admirer, she gives us comedy that has all the attractions of fiction, yet never forsakes the truth.

Apart from these little intermezzos, that are all too short, there is nothing in the play which is not of the theatre theatrical. Whatever plot there is—and it is a mere shadow—is of ancient lineage. The old, old story of wifely suspicions, a nocturnal, but innocent, visit of the husband to another lady, an encounter on the debatable ground, a *deus ex machinâ* (only too ready to wed the other lady), and—satisfactory explanations. The form of the play, too, is old-fashioned. In every act a certain unpleasant lady, the one who is jealous of the Duchess, overhears things, not once, but several times; and she is not the only one who appears on the scene like the time-honoured "inopportune baby." In every scene Mrs. Craigie experiences difficulties with the distribution of the characters. They come—go; come—go, almost as frequently as in the famous Palais-Royal farces with the innumerable doors; but what they really come and go for no one knows. They say things, of course, good things at times, but they serve no purpose, and moreover, are frequently just a little exasperating.

I understand that Mrs. Craigie moulds her plays on the illustrious pattern of Molière; that her technique is but an imitation of his. If this is the case, I fear that Mrs. Craigie will never obtain a firm footing on the modern stage. Molière was, of course, a past master of comedy, but he was so in more senses than one. What was permissible in his time of artificial manners, of graceful and poetic address, of picturesque gesture and picturesque garb, cannot be transferred to our more sober era. We are less imaginative and more reasoning nowadays. We allow only the poet to beguile us, but he who deals with the life we live must be prepared for close scrutiny; and if we may now and again let a false situation pass, we are always on the alert as to the means by which situations are brought about. In other words, we demand that the mechanism (which is something else than construction) of a play should be logical. People must come and go with a motive; people must be factors of the story, and not merely tacked on to say a few clever things which the author wants to air; people must observe, if not the unity, the possibility of time and locality.

In this respect Mrs. Craigie's play is terribly wayward, and I am not at all sure that this vital fault had not something to do with its failure. Fancy! The first two acts are laid in the drawing-room of the Duke's Piccadilly mansion. A few minutes are supposed to elapse between the acts; the time at which the proceedings open is, say, after dinner, for all the ladies and gentlemen are in evening dress. Then the exposition takes place; it covers about an hour, so it probably is by this time 11.30 (in the play). Then the so-called few minutes elapse, during which interval, curiously enough, the Duchess finds time to don another gown. That must mean at least another hour. After that the talk goes on for such a time that it must be long after closing-time before some of the party leave to have supper at the Cosmopolitan Hotel. However, let that pass; the enormity is to follow. I have hinted that the Duke called on another lady—a woman as white as a lily—not for any purposes of his own, but to

advocate the suit of his friend. Well, what do you think of this? He calls and finds her in her sitting-room, long after midnight ("c'est du dernier cru"—as one of the characters would say); but he is not alone there, oh dear no! for just before a garrulous M.P. has chanced to make a respectable nocturnal call on the middle-aged aunt of the lady in question, and, as the Duke enters, she (the younger woman) is exchanging fond words and explanations with her suitor. Finally, at 2 p.m. or thereabout, there is a general gathering of all the main characters in the sitting-room in the Cosmopolitan (ought it not be Bohemian?) Hotel. Really, we are accustomed to swallow much on our stage, but this camel is too big for us.

III.

When Mrs. Craigie gave us "The Ambassador," I was full of joy that a woman of her talent had joined our dramatists. The less successful experiment of "The Wisdom of the Wise" discounts nothing from my firm belief in her ultimate success. Her dialogue, exuberant and all too bountiful as it may be, is often admirable. There is in it the inexpressible something which we call "literature." It falls pleasantly on the ear, it courts the approving smile of the gourmet rather than the boisterous laugh of the gourmand. Even when the witty lines seem somewhat precious, they are obviously less laboured than those of the midnight-oil epigrammatist. If anything, Mrs. Craigie is too witty. And then the atmosphere of her work is aristocratic. From the moment the curtain rises one feels that one is, conversationally, in good society—that the authoress has personally observed that which she reproduces. But her method requires changing, if she wishes to create modern comedies. Molière is an excellent prototype for the poet who loves to linger in bygone days; the chronicler, however, of contemporary life should, if a leaning on models is at all necessary, select those playwrights who excel in modern form of characterisation. Lavedan, for instance, would meet the case; he, too, in his

"Viveurs," and "Prince d'Aurec," has no great plot, and his portrayals are but skin deep; but he is always plausible, and the language of his characters is, in spite of its lightness, relevant, and part and parcel of the play. And if Lavedan is too modern and too "airy" to be understood by our actors, then let Mrs. Craigie study Dumas fils. He was a juggler with words, if ever there was one, but, whether he was right or perverse, one could listen to him for hours without feeling the least trace of languor or fatigue. For it must not be forgotten that, if a play has no plot or deep characterisation, our actors are apt to weaken rather than to strengthen the author's cause. Conversational power is not the "forte" of our players; they can characterise neatly, and cogently express thought and sentiment, but their tongue is not glib and their demeanour not light enough to amuse for a whole evening with bubbles, kites and toy balloons. Under the circumstances Mr. Alexander, Miss Fay Davis, Miss Granville, Mr. H. B. Irving, and Miss Julie Opp, did exceedingly well; in fact, Miss Davis was truly enchanting as the young wife. But, as the play was so invertebrate, the actors, as it were, fought windmills all the time. And the result was even less encouraging than that which rewarded the useless valour of the immortal Don Quixote.

HAYMARKET: "THE SECOND IN COMMAND,"

A Comedy in Four Acts, by Robert Marshall.

Dec. 2nd, 1900.

I.

Scarlet, steel, and khaki are the order of the day. Understand how to troop the colours or how to give a picture of our soldiers' life, and there is a buoyant market and a ready success awaiting you. Captain Robert Marshall has not been slow in recognising this, and, as he possesses a certain facility for condensing his observations into the dramatic form, he set to work and laid the scene of his new play in the land of Mars. It was a happy thought, happily executed, for I am told by experts that there is not a single flaw in the vivid description of the officers' mess-room which the author has written, and that the picture, as a whole and in detail, so far as militarism is concerned, is as lifelike as the stage will permit. What the experts did not know was whether it is likely that an officer on service could possibly go in dread of arrest for debt. A minor question, no doubt, from the point of view of the happy-go-lucky playgoer, but not so unimportant as it might seem when the critical lens discovers it as the mainspring of the whole action. However, the public did not measure "The Second in Command" with the iron rod of logic; it was, from the first, fascinated by the uniforms, the barracks, and the atmosphere of the play, and, so long as the military element remained right and plausible, it did not care one jot for the story, the characterisation, or

the human possibility of all that happened behind the footlights. So here you have an indisputable illustration of that theory which I expounded some weeks ago, the theory that to create atmosphere is one of the foremost gifts of the Dramatist. It is the puissant cloak that covers the majority of a playwright's shortcomings. Without the atmosphere of uniforms and all the extraneous attributes of the soldier, this play would probably have been voted ordinary; clever in parts, particularly in the brilliance of some happy sayings, but otherwise not very amusing, not very exciting, and essentially not very human. Now, however, it scored as soon as the curtain rose, and before the end was reached the audience displayed enthusiasm worthy of a masterpiece.

II.

With no desire to mix vinegar with the sweet wine of Mr. Marshall's commercial success, with great appreciation of, and some admiration for the efforts of a dramatist-soldier to create a species of plays which flourishes in France and Germany, I cannot quite overlook the unreality which blurs the engaging canvas of the military sketch. Mr. Marshall trusts too much to our willingness to take for granted in the theatre, and, relying on the correctness of the general tone of his picture, he makes light of the links which connect his story. The very inception of the plot is fantastic to a degree. We are to hear the love story of two officers, the one a "duffer" of a Major ready to be shelved, the other a Lieutenant-Colonel, who has been ordered to supersede his comrade in the command of the regiment. The Major has long loved pretty Muriel Mannering, the other sees her for the first time as she visits the mess, while she has fallen in love with the Colonel's picture at the Royal Academy(!). At the mess the lady with whom Muriel has been staying tells her that she cannot afford to keep her any longer, with the obvious indication that marriage would be a

suitable career; wherefore Muriel accepts the third proposal of the Major. Having become engaged in haste, she repents at leisure, for behold! the subject of the Academy picture walks in, and with him mutual love at first sight. To complicate matters, Muriel's brother has gambled away much money, fears arrest (?) and is told by a friendly, if not quite honourable lawyer, that a rich marriage for his sister is his only salvation. From this point the tribulations of Muriel begin, and in the second act she executes the following manœuvres:

(1) She listens to, but rebuts, the protestations of love of the Colonel, who ignores his brother officer's prior claim to her affection.

(2) Influenced by the Colonel's appearance and her brother's distress, she induces the Major to release her from her promise.

(3) She informs the Colonel that, there being no longer any obstacle, she is ready to marry him.

(4) Suspected by the Colonel that his money (to save her brother), not his personality, inspires her affection, she is jilted by him under the pretext that he is one "who loves and rides away."

You must admit that it is enough for one act and one girl. But that is not all. Things could have been easily put right if the Major, as would have been natural, had taken the Colonel into his confidence. But that he does not do, and so the girl stands before us in the dim light of mercenary designs and misjudgment. Then comes the third act, in which war has broken out and the regiment has been ordered to the front. Before the hour of parting, the Major feels impelled to make a clean breast of the whole business, and to write a confession of the whole *malentendu*, which would comfort both the Colonel and Muriel. Somehow, probably because there are to be four acts, Muriel does not read the letter. The Colonel goes, and the broken-hearted girl is left behind. Likewise the Major, for whom as a "duffer" there is, at the eleventh hour, no room in active service. In the fourth act all's right at

last; the Major has been sitting on the War Office steps until they let him go out and earn a V.C. The Colonel comes back sound in limb, but with an aching heart. Muriel is amateur-nursing in a little hospital cottage. There is a charming love scene and an anti-climax (in order to re-unite all the characters on the stage), which is as time-honoured as it is inartistic.

III.

This being the fifth play of Captain Marshall, one is now fairly able to estimate his strength. To his credit goes a great deal; imagination, a pretty wit, a delicate manner of slightly outlining characters—for the Major is from beginning to end wholly delightful if not quite consistent; a certain grace of style that pleases and demonstrates keen power of observation. On the other hand, the author is still in the trammels of the conventional manner of play-building; he is too prone to put merely clever things into the mouths of his characters; he works out his plots in accordance with the laws of the theatre, instead of developing them logically, as the circumstances demand; lastly, he is happier in drawing the world in little than the world at large. But, on the whole, the balance is in his favour, and with his pluck and his efforts to be original, with the public and the managers on his side, Mr. Marshall will undoubtedly establish his position as a playwright.

It was a pity that the author was this time absent when the verdict was given. For no dissentient voice was heard, and the acting of some of the artists would have done much to allay his fears. Mr. Cyril Maude and Mr. Allan Aynesworth shared the honours between them; both gave a portrayal of much excellence; both climbed a step higher. Mr. Cyril Maude's strong point as a rule is the comic side of life, but he has a distinct note of pathos of his own, and, although he made no

efforts to let sentiment overshadow his humour, the former was paramount. Thus the Major became not only a diverting, but also a sympathetic figure, and, perhaps, the main attraction of the play. Mr. Aynesworth's dignified, manly, restrained impersonation of the middle-aged Colonel formed a strange contrast to the enterprising Mr. Tarboy of "The Lackey's Carnival." To say that both characters are likely to be remembered is to pay a great and deserved tribute to the versatility of the actor. Mr. A. Vane-Tempest was amusing as a comic man of ancient theatrical parentage, but he does not always see the boundary line that separates comicality from extravagance. There is such a thing as a surfeit of humour.

The cock-a-doodle-doo intonations of Miss Fanny Coleman, who now usually fills the parts but not the place of the late Rose Leclerq, are often discordant when a quiet scene is in progress. Miss Coleman is an experienced actress, but apparently she has no very strongly developed sense of harmony; otherwise she would train her voice to the pitch observed by her colleagues. In the absence of Miss Winifred Emery, Miss Sybil Carlisle filled the part of the heroine. She did her work conscientiously without quickening our pulse or her own. It was a colourless performance, typically British in the sense of the word which implies stolidity and no emotion; and at times it was discomforting to find Miss Carlisle addressing the audience with a vacant stare instead of keeping in touch with her fellow-players. To a certain extent the stage-manager is responsible for these matters: if he were what he should be, an artist, he could tell the actors how to mend their conception and their manners. But the best stage-manager in the world cannot fan a flame when there is no fire. And the public has become so accustomed to passionless, listless, spiritless actresses that it has ceased to discriminate. But some day the *panache* of a warm-blooded woman of genius will set the stage-world astir, and

then good-bye to the wishy-washy style, to the tea-and-tennis girls, and to the hastily manufactured "leading ladies."

OSCAR WILDE AS A DRAMATIST.

December 9, 1900.

I.

With the morals of the man I have nothing to do ; I have to deal with the artist who has gone, for that artist has left his mark upon literature and upon the stage. He was, not so very long ago, one of the nimblest intellects the English world could boast of.

Oscar Wilde's legacy as essayist, fanciful story-teller, poet, and novelist, will probably be dealt with by others. I say probably, for the numerous band that used to consecrate *panem et circenses* to him, and was only too glad to obtain leave to hold one of the multi-coloured streamers waving from his triumphal car,—that band has dwindled down to a few stray devotees, fair friends in bad weather. The rest have shunned the artist because the man had gone under. But I wish to speak here of the dramatist who raised such great hopes, who did so much in a short space of time, and then suddenly withered like a tree struck by lightning. Oscar Wilde has contributed but four plays to our stage, "Lady Windermere's Fan," "A Woman of no Importance," "An Ideal Husband," and "The Importance of being Ernest," while a fifth, "Salome," which was perhaps his best, was written in French and prohibited by the Censor. These four plays all run more or less on the same lines. They are what one could call society plays, pictures of fashionable life in which an unmistakable air of reality is happily wedded to playful satire.

Their greatest merit is their dialogue; the plot is of secondary importance, and the characterisation is such as one would expect from an observant man who has seen much and read more. In other words, Oscar Wilde did not dive very deeply below the surface of human nature, but found, to a certain extent rightly, that there is more on the surface of life than is seen by the eyes of most people—he believed as much in veneer as in deep, untarnishable colour. And, as in the drama veneer is likely to please, while depth of colour is often productive of dullness, he preferred to concentrate his acumen on the language rather than on the underlying humanity of his plays. In this he proved that he knew himself, for lightness of touch, not to say a certain flippancy, 'was a paramount feature of his gifted nature; and when he was all gaiety, sardonism, and persiflage, as in "The Importance of being Ernest," he was happiest. The Aristophanic vein sparkled in it, and it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that this last English play of the unfortunate author was the wittiest comedy of the nineties.

II.

If there was one thing in which Oscar Wilde took himself seriously, it was his reputation as a dramatist. He was not content that his plays were called witty, well-made, and intellectually above almost all the work of his fellow playwrights. It flattered him that Archer placed him on a different plane from all other English dramatic authors, "a plane on which he stood alone," but even that could not satisfy him. He made it clear to me one day that he considered himself the peer of Ibsen, and when, after the production of "Lady Windermere's Fan," I described him as an English Sardou, he said contemptuously, "The founder of the English Théâtre Libre calls *me* an English Sardou!"—thereby indicating that henceforth his confidence in me was radically shaken; while never again did he honour the Independent Theatre with his patronage or presence.

Yet, whatever may otherwise be the shortcomings of my verdicts, for this once I know I was absolutely right. Nor did I in any way intend to belittle the merits of our writer by comparing him to his great French colleague. I was not thinking of the Sardou of "Madame Sans-Gêne," or even of "Fedora" or "Tosca"—the Sardou who prepares pieces for exportation as a Munich brewer doctors his lager beer to suit all climates. No, I was thinking of the Sardou who, in his time, was the prince of French comedy writers, when he gave the series that began with "La Famille Bonoiton," continued with "Nos Intimes," and untimely concluded with "Daniel Rochat" and "Odette." For, wittingly or unwittingly, Oscar Wilde worked on precisely the same lines as Sardou, and more than once was it said that, in construction, in mechanism, even in the mould of the dialogue—when it was dramatic and not merely epigrammatic—the French master had been slavishly copied. For all that the surname of the "English Sardou" was by no means a sobriquet—it was a compliment, and not a lukewarm one. For in those days—they seem to lie leagues behind us now—there was a great dearth of the kind of plays called in France *Comédies de Salon*. We had the fine amiable pictures of middle class life from the pen of Mr. Pinero, the somewhat heavier drawings of Mr. H. A. Jones, the melodramatic comedies of Mr. Haddon Chambers, and here and there the pretty Dickensiana of Mr. Carton. What we had not was the play of "high life," aristocratic in atmosphere, in conversation, with all the foibles and graces that belong to society. Then came "Lady Windermere's Fan," interesting by its very surroundings, pathetic in parts, but never tearful, refined to a fault, witty to the degree of being too brilliant, different withal from every kind of play of native production. It had its weak sides, particularly that air of egotism, which was all the author's own, and which culminated in his appearance before the curtain with a dyed carnation in his buttonhole and a half-smoked cigarette in his hand. The affinity between the author and his work was unmistakable. Yet to all except those who were prejudiced against Oscar Wilde and his

literary work, it seemed that a fresh breeze was wafting across the footlights, and quickly the seeds of the author's wit spread themselves over the town, so that before long there arose imitators galore.

III.

Oscar Wilde had no time to enjoy the ripening of his talent—he has had followers but no disciples. Before he himself had definitely tested his strength and determined his path, came the catastrophe which brought his career to a full stop. “Salome” was his last play known to fame, and to say that Sarah Bernhardt had undertaken to bring it before London is to testify to the excellence of its dramatic fibre and the felicity of its poetry. To “Salome,” which some over here have read, Oscar Wilde owed his great reputation in the French capital, where his English plays were unknown. For “Salome,” gorgeous as the woman of its title, a poem full of charm, quivering with passion, the gates of the literary stronghold of the “*Mercure de France*” were opened to him, and if Sarah Bernhardt had shown more courage, she might, by the production of “Salome,” have paved the way towards a rehabilitation of the author. But after the scandal the actress was ashamed to be associated with the fallen star. “Salome” was produced at the *Théâtre de L’Oeuvre*, and the performance was not such as to gladden the author or add to his fame; but in book form the play was an unprecedented success, and perhaps some day, when the stain on the author's character has been whitened by time, the worthy production of “Salome” will render posthumous homage to the poet.

“Salome” was, so far as the stage is concerned, Oscar Wilde's swan-song, the beautiful “*Ballad of Reading Gaol*” was his adieu to the world of literature. With the career the man was broken, and with the man his spirit. From time to time his name cropped up in connection with our theatres. It was said that he had written plays which were to be produced under another name than his

own. It was rumoured that such and such successful comedy labelled with a popular name was really the work of Oscar Wilde, but there was no evidence to confirm these rumours, and unless something is found among his papers, it may be said that the recent revival of "Lady Windermere's Fan" was the last that will be heard of Oscar Wilde as a dramatist. For already in this rapidly speeding age of ours, the vitality of his plays has been sapped. We have made progress, and that brilliant epigrammatic dialogue, which at the time startled us by its freshness, has become vulgarised, overdone, and is now almost antiquated.

Still it behoves us to remember the man upon whom the friends of our drama once built their rosiest hopes; and while he has died almost in oblivion, while the Press, which derived so much inspiration and so much amusement from him, dismisses his work and his existence with a couple of small printed lines, or none at all, it has been a pleasing task to pay here a small tribute to the artist.

DEC. 16th, 1900.

CENSOR AND CENSORS.

I.

The gentleman who is officially the guardian of our histrionic morality, and the gentlemen who unofficially sit in judgment on our plays, are very much discussed just now. The essence of all the talk seems to be that in both quarters, in Stable-yard as well as in the Olympian part of the theatre, some reform is urgently needed, while, collaterally, it is deemed advisable that henceforth dramatic authors should not respond to the "call" which has become customary on first nights. There is a good deal to be said in favour of wholesale alterations in the administration of our theatrical system, and since the censor, the public, and the authors are involved in the debate, it would have been as well to take to task the tradesmen-managers whose curtain speeches have become an intolerable nuisance. It is, however, to be feared that all the good intentions will, as usual, end in loss of time, since no adequate remedies are brought forward. And in high-quarters of government nobody takes any more notice of club-and-newspaper symposia than the much-amused debaters themselves. The public at large, too, remains entirely insensible to the mole-hills which amateurs of the theatre work up to tottering mountains. All said and done, English people do not take the theatre seriously (alas!), and least of all do they care a jot for the suggestions made within the interesting, but wholly unauthoritative, arenas of semi-private societies. One member of Parliament, bringing the knotty question of the censorship before the House of

Commons, could effect more than all our club-platform eloquence put together; and one single theatrical manager, adopting the French system of announcing the author's name instead of exhibiting his person, could finally settle the etiquette of first nights, and all the glory and ignominy thereto attached. But somehow, until matters degenerate into real scandal, they will be allowed to go on as before. That is the usual way with us; and, meanwhile, the public will calmly permit its servant, the manager, to interfere with freedom of speech, and the censor will continue to sleep on his piles of manuscripts and guineas.

II.

I loathe the censorship, and I contend that, as far as art is concerned, those countries where the inquisition does not exist at all, or where, as in France, it is conducted liberally, almost imperceptibly, by men of letters who understand their people, are in the van of progress. At the same time, protested as I have like everybody else, I am convinced that at the present moment we are not ripe for an abolition of the hated office. For in a country where the theatre is entirely in the hands of commerce, where pay! pay!! pay!!! (honestly if you can, but pay) is the principle, and art a Cinderella, there must be some control. Money-making, I regret to have to say it, is ever conducive to adulteration, and only an ostrich could shut its eyes to the fact that impropriety is the dramatic stuff which sells best. Abroad, in some cities, the police watch public morality in the theatre as well as in the street, but we over here have rightly a rooted objection to police supervision, to say nothing of the poor opinion we entertain of Hermandad as a judge of art. One could cite the most comical incidents on that account from Austrian and German statelets, where every local chief constable acts as dramatic critic, in obedience to whose command such plays as Hauptmann's "Weavers" and Fulda's "Talisman" are ostracised as dangerous to morals, while the high-kicking "Dame de chez Maxime" and her sisters, aunts,

and cousins, are welcomed with open arms and keen opera glasses. Over here the police would be the fifth wheel on the vehicle, since it is already represented by the "Common-informer," that parasite on our freedom whose existence our laws still encourage.

Granted that, in some form or other, the censorship is indispensable, the present administration of the office, delegated by the Lord Chamberlain to a clerk, is certainly a *reductio ad absurdum*. There is no earthly need for a worthy man to sit in St. James's Palace and to collect a guinea or two for every play submitted for license. Apart from the question whether the majority of the plays so tendered are worth the guineas or even the cost of paper and copying, there is this to be said, that there is an enormous difference between the play that is read and the play that is acted. Paper is notoriously patient, and overlooks a great deal which, vivified by voice and gesture, may become offensive. Most French farces are not half as equivocal when they are read as when they are performed, for the authors' directions cannot possibly convey the meaning which a glance, an intonation, a movement of the actor is able to distil from them. And even more than in French plays, in musical comedies, such as abound in our theatres, the spoken phrase is open to a doubtful construction, which the most careful perusal of the manuscript could not possibly detect. For some actors are past masters in the production of (what we call in bad French) "double-entendres." On the other hand, a play of exalted qualities—say by Ibsen, Tolstoi, Hauptmann—may shock the superficial reader, while in the hands of an artist who enters into and understands the spirit of the work, a painful or unpleasant situation may lose much of its seeming grossness.

It is not necessary for the purpose of my case to enumerate the countless errors of the present Reader of Plays. To refer to "For Auld Lang Syne" at the 'Lyceum' and "The Price of Peace" at Drury Lane, in which the honour of the Army and Parliament are defiled, is sufficient to refresh the memory and to bring back other

instances. Nor is it necessary to expatiate on the difficulties of the censorial office in its present form. The finest and most refined mind alive could not escape traps and pitfalls by merely *reading* plays. What, then, should a censor do to justify the existence of his function? The answer is obvious, though curiously enough nobody has so far thought of giving it. He should first of all be awake and active; he should, for the ample fee which he receives, not only read the plays submitted to him; he should go to the dress-rehearsals if there existed the slightest doubt in his mind as to the propriety of the drift of the play, and order modification where it is needed. He should—lest, fortified by the liberty obtained after the dress-rehearsal, managers give free reins to license—from time to time, without previous notice and against payment, witness performances and make his notes. That is an arduous task, I know, but too much work is less harmful than happy-go-lucky indolence, and, if the censor is indispensable, it is as well that he should do his duty in such a manner as to prove his usefulness and so falsify the general impression of his office as a ludicrous bundle of red-tape.

III.

So much for the censor. Now what about the censors—the plurality that makes or mars the *debut* of a play? Is reform needed in these regions too? is it reprehensible, in pit and gallery, to contrast the applause and the bravos of a success with a “boo” and hiss when the play has overtaxed their patience? On the whole, I think we may feel well satisfied with the attitude of our first-nighters. The ideal would be to imitate the Americans, and to file out of the theatre in funereal silence if a play is a failure. Nothing is so eloquent as a “dead cut.” But after a night’s boredom one can well forgive a little outburst of passion; it is human to seek consolation in angry expressions. And, after all, too much severity is by no means the failing of our pittites and galleryites. They are on

the whole much too lenient where real "rubbish" is concerned—musical comedies, Drury Lane melodramas, &c.—and, curious though it may sound, they are inclined to mete out heavy punishment when writers of quality, such as Henry James, Mrs. Craigie, or H. A. Jones, make an artistic mistake.

The recent reception accorded to Mrs. Craigie was a significant instance of the manner in which our serious playgoers hold the scales. Although the friends of the management tried to force a favourable verdict after every act, there was no outcry, but simply a prolonged "hush." At length, when at the close another effort was made to work up a demonstration of approval in the teeth of a dissatisfied majority; when the authoress, called by some, "noed" by others, was dragged to the footlights by the manager, the storm arose. Yet it did not rage until the manager, livid with anger, insulted the playgoers who did not like the play. After that there was chaos, and, much as it is to be regretted that the castigation was administered to an actor-manager who has rendered real service to our national drama, it cannot be gainsaid that the manifestation as a whole was justifiable. For it is the right of every paying playgoer to signify his pleasure or discontent in an effective manner, and, so long as the law does not prove it to the contrary, the "boo" is as legitimate as the demonstrations of approval, against which no mortal manager has ever yet protested. As regards the unfortunate fact of Mrs. Craigie's unflattering reception at the St. James's Theatre, while condoling with the gifted authoress, one can but endorse the spirit of her own letter to *The Times*. She is quite right in saying that when one has worked for the best, one must not be afraid of the consequences. And the world adds: "The woman who is bold enough to write plays should take the verdict like a man." Yes, but even after a bad premiere it would be chivalrous in men not to forget the reverence due to a woman.

COMEDY : BENSON'S SHAKESPEAREAN SEASON.

Dec. 23rd, 1900.

I.

One of these days somebody will write an interesting essay on the probable drift of the drama in the beginning of the twentieth century. And from all the facts which point to a temporary revival of the romantic and poetic drama, the soothsayer will single out the present vogue of Shakespeare as the most significant. It is, indeed, a joy and a wonder to witness how, in less than ten years, our insular notion, that the greatest dramatist of all times must be played to empty benches or consumptive exchequers, has changed into worship of the master,—to contemplate how gradually one theatre after another has forsaken the lesser living authors for the immortal bard. It is also satisfactory to find in the theatres a public which hitherto has held aloof because, rightly or wrongly, the spectacle on the stage was not in harmony with their sentiments. Thus Shakespeare brings the theatre into closer touch with the nation, and may help to accomplish that which to many of us is an ideal—the foundation of an Imperial Theatre.

To mention Shakespeare is, almost inevitably, to broach the question of a subsidised theatre, for to do justice to the poet we do not require merely first-rate scenery and supers; we want first-rate acting,—men and women who are artists and know how to speak blank verse. At present our Shakespeare performances are mostly “decent”

—to use a concise vulgarism—and nothing more. Here and there a star glitters in the firmament, but all around hangs haze—picturesque if you like, fascinating if you do not discriminate—but disconcerting and not comparable to the serene atmosphere of true poetry.

The star-system has, to some, become so obnoxious that they prefer an all-round mediocre efficiency to the brilliancy of a single individual. That is, perhaps, the cause and the explanation of the Benson company's success.

II.

Mr. Benson is not a star-actor in the ordinary sense of the word. He possesses many of the qualifications of the actor-manager, but, fortunately, few of his faults. He does not constantly push his own personality to the fore, nor does he always monopolise the centre of the stage. On the contrary, his aim seems to be to obtain as completely good a production of the plays as is possible with the means at his disposal. The question is whether Mr. Benson is generally happy in his selections. For one thing, he overtaxes the resources of his wife, a cultured lady, who would grace second-rate parts, but is not strong enough to play lead. Then, when comparing the graveyard columns on the first page of the *Era* with Mr. Benson's company, I find that he has overlooked many useful and talented people who have long been "resting," and engaged a clan of provincial actors, all of whom are well-meaning, but who show only too obviously the faults of their kind.

Take, for instance, the performance of "The Merry Wives," which inaugurated Mr. Benson's season at the Comedy. The cast was long and the task heavy. Now, "The Merry Wives" comes low down on the list of Shakespearean work; only fine acting can fill the many gaps of ennui in this strangely uneven comedy. Yet in Mr. Benson's company, perfectly organised as it is—so perfect that the fourteen scenes covered less than three

hours—there were but three actors who, besides the manager, could be honestly said to pass muster. The Falstaff was quite beside the mark. He worked hard enough, but he was entirely deficient in humour. An elephant dancing a polka were funnier than fat-bellied John saying his witty things in a pointless manner. The Mistress Ford of Mrs. Benson was also inconsiderable; she was humorous by dint of study, but not by intuition, and the gulf between the two is insuperable. Mr. Benson, on the other hand, as the physician, was exceedingly droll in his indefatigable energy, and his French is delightful; it has not any of the usual British flavour. One is always impressed by the fact that Mr. Benson is a scholar and a student. Miss Elsie Chester—an actress of more than ordinary gifts—as the Mistress Page was entirely in touch with the character. Her gaiety is spontaneous, she knows naught of stage or public; while donning the picturesque clothes of the time she slips into the part, and for the time being Miss Elsie Chester is merged in Mistress Page. That is what I call acting. Mr. Oscar Asche, always sturdy and fine in his diction, had but little to do as Pistol. He is one of the pillars of the company. But the success of the evening was scored by Mr. Frank Rodney as Ford. Hey, how breezy, how inspired and inspiring that was! Talk of the dearth of romantic actors, here is one that will set the pulse astir. With every muscle of his face he lives his part; he does not spare his physique nor his brains; and, unconscious as he appears, he conveys the humour of the situation to us in such a manner that we both laugh at Ford's jealousy and sympathise with him.

The return of the Benson Company is welcome, its programme is promising, its work meritorious. The young in particular should be taken to these pleasant revivals of Shakespeare's comedies, for there is education in such stage performances. And that is, I take it, the noblest mission of the drama.

LYCEUM: LEWIS WALLER AS HENRY V.

December 30, 1900.

I.

"Henry V." is the epic of Jingoism, the drama of "Rule Britannia," with the spirit of "God save the King" floating through every line. It is one of those plays which, acted with breeziness and fervour, spurs the blood through the veins, swells the breast with pride, makes the heart drum in martial excitement. It affects the hearer as a regiment of soldiers does when it marches through the streets with jubilating brass—a telling fragment of the nation's vigorous self-confidence. Such a play comes at the right time when, in the vein of such braggadocio as animated the tottering King Charles VI., a Mercier vapours of invasions of England, and this country is day by day the target of envious vituperation. Not that the nation wants a play to raise its spirits, for never was patriotism more manifest than in the troubled hours of the waning era. But there is always joy, and a useful object-lesson in a brilliant page of history. And if ever there was a play in which the finest manly qualities of a people are vividly and picturesquely extolled, it is in this war-like poem of the fifth Henry.

II.

"Henry V." is a play of acting and action, not of psychology. Except in the comic scenes, which I love

least and find a disturbing element, the entire action is declamatory and pictorial. No bare boards and merely curtained entrances will suffice as a frame to this living and eloquent tableau of a glorious historical episode; in this case the scenery, the clanging of arms and armour heighten the effect. The more actors the merrier, and the better they understand the bustle and the virile tone of the drama, the more the pulse of the audience will be quickened. But above all a great orator is required to impersonate the warrior king. By this I do not mean a skilful dispenser of Hyde-Park-like or Parliamentary eloquence, neither hollow declamation nor the acme of polish, but a voice that electrifies, because it is the voice of nature, a voice that thrills by the sincere conviction of its accents. Few men, and fewer actors, have this magic, this Napoleonic gift which would vivify the faltering and drive them gaily on to peril and destruction. That is why "Henry V." has so rarely maintained its footing on any stage. All depends on the King; if he misses fire the play merely fatigues by its verbosity. For until the last act—the scene of peace and wooing—is reached, the King's enthusiasm must be maintained; one moment's flagging is fatal. It lays a heavy burden on the shoulders of the actor, but Mr. Lewis Waller was often equal to it.

Although it was but tardily recognised, Lewis Waller was always the man designated for Shakespearean heroic parts. None equals him in figure, in force, in the splendour of his voice. Waller's Hotspur was the herald of his Shakespearean career. But his Hotspur, fine as it was, contained only a promise—others have been known to be to be carried away by the impetuous words of this character, yet subsequently to fail in parts exacting greater strain. For what does for Hotspur will not do for Henry V. The note that governs the legal swordsman is not impulse, but enthusiasm—the wonderful exultation that is the mother of immense deeds under adverse circumstances. It is not enough for King Henry, when he declares war on France, to ignite his soldiers. That is comparatively easy. But he must husband his strength;

for when the English army, in a strange land, is decimated by illness and slaughter, and faced by an overpowering majority, his fiery eloquence alone can save the situation. His words must pour courage into the disheartened minds of his warriors. And at this juncture in particular Lewis Waller rose to magnificence; his voice sounded like a tocsin, and, in spite its being all merely "play," I could realise the strange power by which one human voice may rouse an entire population. An actor who thus gives his entire heart and soul, to say nothing of his imagination, to his work, is a true artist, and the fact that he inspires his public and his fellow-players alike is not the least meritorious part of a splendid achievement.

RETROSPECTION.

January 6, 1901.

I.

It may be seasonable, but it is not reasonable to elicit a plebiscite as to the best play of the nineteenth century. There is not a man in London who could speak his mind on this subject with any hope that his opinion would be accepted as final. For there is not a man in London—or anywhere else in the world—who is sufficiently acquainted with, and sufficiently competent to judge, the literature of all countries, to undertake so wide a survey. The fact is that every nation has produced one or some works, which, from a national point of view, are considered the plays of the century, no matter whether they have been translated into many tongues or have remained confined to one. The whole question turns on point of view, on taste, and, to a certain degree, on the vitality of such works. For we are always apt to forget, while praising contemporary work, that which was famous yesterday. And taking a case in point, it is as illogical to proclaim the eight-year-old “Second Mrs. Tanqueray” the English play of the century, as to say that the half-century “*Dame aux Camélias*” deserves the same honour in France, an honour which I, by the way, would hotly dispute. Plays, like other manifestations of literature and art, frequently owe their vogue to the moment of their birth. If they come at the right time they may be extolled far beyond their merits, while if, on the other hand, they come inoppor-

tunely, dealing with matters that happen to rouse no immediate interest, greatness may pass unnoticed, while mediocrity is lifted to the skies. Moreover, our literary horizon in England is very narrow. We know a little of what is going on in France, we have read Ibsen and Bjornson, we have seen Sudermann, who is clever, not great; we have tasted the smallest spoonful of Hauptmann and Maeterlinck; but really we—that is, the public, which makes and mars reputations—we are absolutely incapable of forming a correct estimate of the literary movement abroad. The commercial system of our theatres closes the door to all artistic literature of foreign drama; what we see are often the weakest plays of distinguished foreigners, as in the case of Hauptmann, Sudermann, and the rest, and then these plays come to us in a form so mutilated that a Rostand and his peers would fail to recognise their children. The real *chefs d'œuvre* of the world are withheld from us, and even the "Faust" which was presented at the Lyceum was not the poem of Goethe, but the caricature of Wills.

Therefore it is futile to argue, partly because we are not able to grasp the magnitude of the subject, and partly because it is too early to speak of the century's work when that century has only just closed.

In a decade or two—say about 1925—we will see what remains of "Tanqueray," of "Cyrano de Bergerac," of Victor Hugo and the two Dumas, of Ibsen and the German Clan. And then, perhaps, after having applied to all these plays the touchstone which at present exalts "Faust" above all that was given us from 1800 to 1900, we may be able to decide with some certainty the supreme legacy of the bygone era.

II.

It is an easier matter to deal with our drama of 1900, for, alas! there is little to choose. Few plays have survived the year, and among these few the majority does not live by virtue of its merits, but by its momentary

influence on the exchequer of the playhouses. Our most successful and most renowned dramatist, Mr. A. W. Pinero, has been silent; Mr. Henry Arthur Jones has given us two plays, one failure and a partial success. Yet I prefer the unlucky "Lackey's Carnival" to "Mrs. Dane's Defence," with its three indifferent acts and one overpowering scene. "Mrs. Dane's Defence" is clever manufacture with a nutshell of humanity floating on an ocean of artifice. The other play—an attempt to depict life below stairs—contains much more humanity, but it was disfigured by errors of taste and certain melodramatic side-issues which were neither palatable nor verisimilar.

Mr. R. C. Carton, too, has gone into the kitchen and succeeded in drawing the town to see the cook, pots and pans, and several gentlemen forgetting *noblesse oblige*. Mr. Carton's play was not intrinsically a good one, but it was saved by the actors, at any rate at the Criterion; later, when I saw it in suburban surroundings acted by more or less indifferent players, the flimsiness of the structure, the inherent inaneity of the story were so palpable, that even the habitual, superficial cleverness of the dialogue failed to dispel the general impression of poverty.

Mr. Sydney Grundy, again, like Mr. Jones, wrote a magnificent act in a "Debt of Honour" (the second), and four others which shall remain uncriticised. This talented, but, alack! wholly commercial dramatist, was guilty of an act of vandalism which nobody would believe if the facts were not indisputable. He evolved his "Debt of Honour" from a one-act play called "In Honour Bound," which was probably borrowed from Scribe. Artistically this evolution was unsuccessful and unsatisfactory. The last act was voted entirely inconclusive. What then did Mr. Grundy do? He tacked the original comedietta, as an epilogue, on to the five-act drama, and allowed it to appear as a compact play. I say, with the Danichefs of Newky-Dumas: "If I told this story in Paris they would give me the lie direct." But when commerce reigns supreme, adulteration does not stop at arsenicated beer! Mr.

Robert Marshall has produced two plays in rapid succession, "The Noble Lord" and "The Second in Command." The latter has some merit because it gives a clever and faithful sketch of military life. It may be considered as the forerunner of a new element of play-writing in England. The drama proper in "The Second in Command" was less valuable than the bye-work. It was in Robertsonian vein, but not in his best. Mr. J. M. Barrie's "The Wedding Guest" was ambitious, and, in detail, cleverly received. The great moral problem which underlay the plot was interesting, but clumsily handled. In its working out it tendered a sop to Mrs. Grundy and the moralists, and thereby its value was discounted. On the other hand, Mr. Frank Harris, in his bold firstling, "Mr. and Mrs. Daventry," in some respects the most straightforward play (in more senses than one) which the new English drama has produced, flew in the face of the conventions that rule over theatres, and fierce war was waged against the fearless author. In the end the moralists succumbed, and "Mr. and Mrs. Daventry" is—I hope on account of its real merits, and not because of its suspected impropriety—one of the most successful plays of the day. Mr. Louis N. Parker had a lookwarm success with his "Swashbuckler," which contained some poetic scenes, but was altogether too sweet and sentimental to please the average matter-of-fact playgoer. The Nell Gwynne plays are of no account at all. And Mrs. Craigie attempting to adopt the manner of Molière in "The Wisdom of the Wise," a comedy of modern life, experienced the bitter disappointment of witnessing the failure of her clever but too copious dialogue, and of her carefully studied modernisation of an antiquated system.

All these plays, besides the host that has already gone, will ere long be lost in oblivion. The one drama that will defy time for awhile, as a poem, if not as an acted play, is Mr. Stephen Phillips's "Herod." It marks an epoch, since it is the first poetic play of late years that has achieved something more than a mere *succes d'estime*. And as the public has taken kindly to it, we may well

anticipate that ere long modern verse will regain its place on our boards. "Herod" is not a masterpiece, and undeniably it is more fascinating on paper than in its beautiful, but not quite adequate, histrionic presentment. Nor is it a work vibrating with inspiration; but it is grand in conception, nobly wrought, and in parts, dramatic. "Herod" promises greater achievements in the future, but, at any rate, it has the distinction of shedding lustre on an inglorious year.

III.

1900, besides being the year of "Herod," has been characterised by three distinct features. It has seen the decline of melodrama (reaching the depths in the production of "The Price of Peace" at Drury Lane, and of the unspeakable "For Auld Lang Syne" at the Lyceum), and the momentary extinction of modern English comedy. Moreover, and this is a joyful fact, it has witnessed an unprecedented renaissance of the Shakespeare cult. I have no means of deciding why English comedy is temporarily dead. It is all the more extraordinary since the public clamours for "laughter," and farce and musical comedy still hold their own. Perhaps financial reasons are at the bottom of it all; farce has been found to pay, and farce requires less study than comedy, which should reflect the manners of the period. Therefore, why work hard if much is to be earned at leisure? And with this consideration in their minds, playwrights, who could do better, continue to manufacture worthless matter for the gullible crowd. It is the apotheosis of the abominable maxim that "art is the curse of the drama." But, fortunately, Shakespeare is there to defeat the cheap jokes and to vindicate the taste of our public. Mr. Tree has given us "Midsummer Night's Dream" and "Julius Cæsar," Mr. Forbes Robertson "Hamlet" and "Macbeth," Mr. Lewis Waller "Henry V.," Mr. Benson a whole series of the bard's comedies, and the cry is, still they come. That is, let us hope, a sign of the times, the dawn

of better days. So long as Shakespeare draws the crowd, in spite of alluring competition, we need not bewail the poverty of our contemporary drama. He will show us the way and fortify us in it: Nil Desperandum.

HAUPTMANN'S LATEST PLAY.

January 13, 1901.

I.

If Gerhart Hauptmann's latest play, "Michael Kramer," means anything at all, it must be the glorification of death in contrast to the miseries of life. Death, says the poet, is the mildest form of life, the masterpiece of eternal love. Life is but a succession of feverish shiverings, now cold then hot, now hot then cold. Death is the great healer, the universal pardoner. Over the lifeless body, over the bier, over the grave, be it freshly closed or overgrown with moss and flowers, we forget the past. Virtues are magnified, vices minimised, the rough edges of a character are filed off, the very quarrels with the living are bemoaned as though they were joyful recollections. And oh, the remorse we suffer! What we might have seen in him; what we might have done for him; how such or such an action of ours might have changed and bettered the course of his life; how this or that incident, to which we plead guilty, may have hastened the end. In fine, death, while it sends to sleep the human machine that is spent, becomes the awakener of the living.

Michael Kramer, the artist, realises all this when his only son is brought home, a suicide dragged out of the river. In his lifetime the boy, misshapen, ugly, dissolute, idle, had been his father's idol and his scourge. Great hopes had been built upon the child, for the old artist saw in him that which was denied to himself. He saw that his

son's horizon as an artist was unbounded by the limitations of a mere talent such as his own, or that of his painstaking but uninspired daughter. He saw genius in the boy, and expected great things from him. But, spoiled in his youth, tyrannised over in his early manhood, Arnold Kramer had run wild—run wild as German lads sometimes do, staying out late at night, hanging about in the café, ogling the gaudy Hebe behind the counter. It was not so very dreadful, after all, but the war of the latch-key causes a terrible to-do in an old-fashioned family in provincial Germany. The curse of the young fellow was his ugliness, which repelled others and rendered him a misanthropist, a terror at home and a kind of satyr out of doors. Undoubtedly, if he continued in that way, his genius and his career must come to grief. And his parents did not know what to do with this singular character; even a great effort on the part of the father to establish a friendship with his son was thwarted by the invincible callousness of the misguided "eaglet." He continued to spend his evenings and his nights brooding over a single glass of beer, to the annoyance of the "jeunesse dorée" of the city that frequented the café. He persisted in pestering the innkeeper's daughter with his unwelcome attentions. He retaliated on those who mocked him, and, on account of his ugliness, called him a "Marabou." And one night, when there was too much wine on the enemy's side and jealous anger bubbling over in young Kramer, there was a brawl, with the usual result of a provocation to a duel. In mortal fear for his life the young artist sought death. In the middle of the night the father answered the familiar ring at the front door, ready to scold his belated offspring, but this time he was brought home on a stretcher, "found drowned."

II.

The play failed when it first saw the light at the Deutsches Theater in Berlin, and the world said that Hauptmann, in all his career, had only made one greater mis-

take. That was when in "Florian Greyer" he attempted to render history subservient to the stage. Only one scene seemed to lay hold of the public, a scene of great dramatic force, at the end of the second act. Until then the exposition had been moving with excessive slowness; there was characterisation, but no growth of interest in the story. It all tended to show how unhappy Michael Kramer's home was because the son had blighted the parents' hopes, while the daughter, a docile beast of burden, was prematurely faded with working to support the poor family. Nor was there much excitement in the paternal exhortations on the subject of late nights, or in the uncalled-for visit of the barmaid, who came to complain to the father of the son's importunity. (People do these things in small continental towns.) Then, in the second act, after much wasteful dialogue between Kramer's daughter and a painter, who had apparently had an amourette with her in bygone days, but had meanwhile wedded a very silly cipher of a woman—mere padding all this—father and son had an explanation. With singular directness and, perhaps, in even fewer words than are required to narrate it, both defined their opinions, and, when the heat of the discussion had subsided, Michael Kramer made overtures of peace. On one condition he would change his whole attitude towards his son, he merely demanded a truthful account of how the youth had spent the preceding night. He knew full well what had happened, but he wanted the truth as a ransom for future peace. The son lied, he said he had been with respectable friends, instead of in the beerhouse. The father repeated, urged the question, besought him to be truthful:

KRAMER: Arnold, here is my hand. Trust me—you hear? Don't hide yourself, be open with me.

For your own sake, Arnold. I don't care where you were yesterday; but tell me. Tell me, do you hear, *for your own sake*. Perhaps you will learn to know me as I am. Well; where were you last night?

ARNOLD: I have told you already where I was.

KRAMER: I forget what you told me. Well, where were you? I do not ask you in order to punish you. I ask you merely for the sake of the truth. Be truthful, that is all I want.

ARNOLD (obstinately): You know that I was with my friend Alfred.

KRAMER: Were you, indeed?

ARNOLD (wavering): Where should I have been?

KRAMER: You are not my son, you cannot be my son. Go! Go! I am sick. You sicken me!

ARNOLD: (Slouches away silently).

(Curtain.)

It seems as bald as an iceberg, this sober, fragmentary, commonplace prose. Yet it made a mighty impression, because it is an ordinary situation, told with the words and the natural force of daily life. In the great tragic moments of our existence, moments that may determine our future, we make no speeches, we utter spasmodic sentences, unpolished, unstudied, and Hauptmann possesses the rare faculty of reproducing the terrible abruptness of such moments.

In the next act there is one of those beerhouse scenes for which Hauptmann seems to have a predilection. In "Fuhrmann Herschel" there was one, according to some critics the most forcible scene in the play. But this time the effect is missed. The scene neither reads nor acts well, and there is so much futile talk before the climax—the brawl—is reached, that the suspicion is aroused that the author was at loss how to bridge over the space between the second act and the last. Unfortunately, the conclusion is even more undramatic than the greater part of the preceding incidents. Suddenly all action stops, and the characters fall into philosophical contemplation of the virtues of death, which are suitable to an essay, but, in spite of the dialogue form, quite foreign to drama. One little touch of feeling there is, when a wreath is brought from a disciple of young Kramer—a girl plain and ungainly like the dead youth. She had merely frequented the studio because there she could be near

him—a silent, loving soul, the only one who felt drawn to him. But the rest is all philosophy—some of it even sophistry—such as Ibsen knows how to mould in the dramatic form, but which remains lifeless in the hands of Hauptmann.

III.

It is not necessary for a play to have a purpose—a didactic purpose I mean. But, if it obviously has one, the main idea must be steadfastly developed from the first. In "Michael Kramer" Hauptmann started, as we surmised, to create a pendant to his comedy of "Colleague Crampton," which dealt with a phase of artistic life. We foresaw in Michael Kramer the opposition between a talented father and a son of genius, a tragedy inspired to a certain extent by Zola's "Oeuvre." We expected a great conflict after the second act, for there was all the material for it. Indeed, there is tragedy enough in the son's position, apart from any struggle between himself and his father;—a young man of genius, hating the world, feeling his superiority to it, yet baulked in his every approach to what his natural youthful ardour impels him, by his repulsive appearance. But Hauptmann burks the tragedy when it has just begun. He foregoes the evolution and merely shows the issue. That is dangerous, but it becomes fatal when, as in this fourth act, the drama vanishes, and reflections unskilfully linked to the main theme take its place. On this unwarranted duality the play was bound to fail, but there was another cause. Hauptmann has not only ill-balanced the interest of his play, he has also introduced a duality of style which comes as a surprise and a disappointment. In the first three acts his method is all his own—we recognise, if not to perfection, still in a measure, the pen that wrote "Hannele" and "The Weavers," "The Beaver-Fur," and "Jobmaster Henschel." But in the last act of "Michael Kramer" it is no longer Hauptmann who speaks. It is a kind of Ibsen, an imitator of the Northern master, one who has studied and grown

familiar with his manner, but, like all Ibsen's imitators, has failed to assimilate his singular power. And Ibsen's style, used by anybody else but Ibsen, is not only intolerable, it is futile. That is why this encomium of death does not move us. The thought is grand, but the expression defective.

A PIECE OF "WAR."

January 20, 1901.

I.

Mr. Willian Heinemann has joined the trilogists. Thus he follows in the wake of Schiller, of Wagner, of Zola, of —Mr. Georges Ohnet.

When the first play of the series, "Summer Moths," appeared, there was no hint of affinity between it and the following dramas. It was a work that, like a modest villa in the suburbs, boasted of its own grounds, instead of being one of a crowd in a speculator's row. Then, reading the Old Testament, Mr. Heinemann was riveted by Exodus viii., 19.

"Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh: 'This is the finger of God'; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he harkened not unto them; as the Lord had said."

"The finger of God," I hear Mr. Heinemann say, who, as Maeterlinck's publisher, is naturally fond of symbolism; "what an imposing peg on which to hang a trilogy!" And lo! before the "Summer Moths" knew what was going to happen to them, they lost their title to their "own grounds," became part and parcel of the dawning Finger-of-God trilogy, and ere long found themselves semi-attached unto "War," the most *jeune-siècle* production of the British drama.

What the connection is between "War" and "Summer Moths" you must not ask me, for I cannot answer. Nor can Mr. Heinemann, I fear, although Nuttall says:

"TRILOGY: A series of three dramas bearing relation to each other as parts of one historical picture."

But that is a detail. We are wont to bring descriptions up to date nowadays. What used to be burlesque has grown into musical comedy; boisterous farce is exalted to the rank of comedy; and even melodrama is ashamed of its descent, and appears on the playbill as "drama of modern life." So Mr. Heinemann has a good defence, to which he could add that the General of "Summer Moths" appears also in "War" (pensioned and slightly aged), and establishes a kind of link, although the drama could do very well without him. As the third and complementary play still slumbers in the womb of time, it is difficult to say how Exodus viii., 19, will ultimately affect the trilogy as a whole. But, meanwhile, it seemed interesting to demonstrate as concisely as possible in how far the latest tragedist deviates from the time-honoured canons of the classics.

II.

In "War" our author reveals himself as the boldest Revolutionist of the new century. Under the ægis of Exodus viii., 19, he forestalls the very ordinances of Providence—not so much on the domestic side of the play, which deals largely with family squabbles in the proud and noble house of Vansittart, as in its political background. For Mr. Wm. Heinemann so wills it that the Dutch—who, under "Van" Tromp (the man's name was Tromp without the "Van") sailed up the Thames with a broom on the top-mast—pick another quarrel with us. This time it is all on account of the Boers, and, no doubt, fortified by the recent utterances in the French Senate of General Mercier, they invade England without so much as a moment's warning. Of course it is very naughty and very foolhardy of pro-Boer little Holland (hitherto content with heaping daily newspaper opprobrium on Great Britain) to select the scene of the "Norman invasion" for a filibustering expedition into modern

England. But there it is, and so swift is the retribution that meets the Dutch that they disembark, are beaten and kicked out of the country in twenty-four hours. For that is the exact time covered by the three acts of the play. No wonder that after this heroic feat Captain Vansittart, fearless of Dutch pluck, asks for a brandy and soda before anything else!

Well, that broom of "Van" Tromp is gloriously avenged, although we perceive nothing of it except the glare of fire in the distance, and the thunder of cannon, which agreeably strengthens the dialogue of the second act. We take it, however, for granted, and await the New Century's event with interest.

Now for the inner war. It is here more or less a case of "caste," of hearts and coronets. Lucy of the blue Vansittart blood loves Major Hitchcock, a brilliant officer, but a butcher's son. Her mother, brother, sister and sister-in-law are not at all pleased with the prospective match, and, except a crippled brother, who is a good sort, but cantankerous and satirical on account of his physical condition, everybody sneers at the Major. They even begrudge him the honour of having saved Captain Vansittart's life. But Lucy, the "true-blue" girl she is, sticks to her Major, and, when afar the guns thunder danger signals, she rushes to the battlefield to be by his side and to tend the wounded. The price of her heroism is death. And the home coming of her body on a stretcher, covered by the Union Jack, gives a fine opportunity for the display of the cloth that never fails to make an effective "curtain."

III

"Fact is," as the old General says in and out of season, that Mr. Heinemann has wasted a great subject. There are such immense possibilities in that curt, simple word of "War," that to use the title for an ordinary domestic play, with a lurid but quite immaterial background of fighting is almost sacrilege. In a drama having the object of

demonstrating the influence of war on a country and its people it must be brought home to us what war means—the thrill it sends through every soul; the terror that it causes in the threatened land; the anxiety, the misery, the sorrow it spreads over the homesteads. The first condition is that we should feel—feel the blistering heat of the war-torch in every picture, in every line, in every word. The Drama of War should shake us like high fever; it should now deject, now rouse us; it should fling us from anguish to joy, from hope to despair. For war strikes the marrow of a nation, and, when the enemy stands upon the home soil, there is not a loyal citizen who does not suffer. A dramatist can show us this, in the modern fashion, by painting in detail the horrors and the heroism of the battlefield; or he may narrow down his action by bringing it under a typical domestic roof and proving the “meaning” of “war” by its effects upon the characters. Mr. Heinemann has selected the latter, easier method, but, as I said before, his action is mainly concerned with an unseemly family quarrel, the old, old story of blue blood and burgher blood. As if, in time of war, a Captain Vansittart would pause to belittle in language none too choice—“boulderlike” language I would fain call it, with apologies for the unparliamentary word—a Major Hitchcock, every inch his superior, lowly descent notwithstanding. “Fact is,” I say again with the General, that Mr. Heinemann had no drama to develop, or, if he had one in his mind, he has not succeeded in writing it. Incidents there are in this play, incidents which might have been woven into something poignant; but there is no composition, no intimate sequence, no feeling. Mr. Heinemann writes his dialogue neatly, without much waste of words, and yet in its sobriety it is exuberant because there is not a flicker of real heartfelt sentiment, not an atom of passion, of enthusiasm. All these people in the play are absolutely devoid of individuality, and the usual argument that Englishmen are not wont to “gush,” even in moments of excitement, will not hold good. Between melodramatic “gush,” after the fashion of the

Latin races, and the true note of sentiment that springs from the heart, there is a vast difference. And it is just this difference which Mr. Heinemann in all his plays has, so far, failed to understand. He has watched how Ibsen and Hauptmann write, he is attracted by the simplicity of their seeming commonplace language, and, believing that it is not difficult to write in this unaffected style, he invents his title and a shadow of a plot, and then he jots down his phrases just as they rush to his pen. When the play is ready, every aspect of the modern method is there; but one thing is wanting, and that is the soul. Mr. Heinemann must try to find the soul first. Once found, it is no herculean task to generate the body to match it; a skilful collaborator could do it for him. But even a title magnificent in its terseness, and a Bible text floating like a halo over that title, do not inspire a good play if the writer does not succeed in rising to the height of his subject; and that Mr. Heinemann, in spite of many good qualities, does not so succeed, must, I fear, be the general verdict.

DECORUM.

January 27, 1901.

I.

An anonymous article in the *Daily Mail* has caused a good deal of friction in the theatrical world. It was an outspoken article, a little superficial perhaps, but it said a good many things about living actors which, if they were not flattering to them, must have sounded agreeable to the oft harassed goddess of Truth. This time the author, who would have done well to sign his name instead of hiding behind the mask of anonymity, did not belaud the actor-managers; on the contrary, he lifted one or two of them from their pedestals, bringing them down to the level earth upon which all we mortals walk. This naturally failed to please the heads of stage-land, and one of them, suspecting a well-known dramatic critic of being the anonymous image-breaker, seized the opportunity of a professional matinée to fling down the gauntlet to this critic in particular, and to the Press in general. Unfortunately the suspicions were ill-found; the critic in question was innocent of the article, and the actor-manager, who repeated his attack at the banquet of a theatrical club, brought down a vigorous storm of remonstrance upon his head. At the same club which gave the banquet the critic, a week later, coupled his emphatic denial with a string of scathing remarks upon the conduct of the several theatrical managers who are

wont to beguile their first-night audiences with curtain-speeches concerning the play launched upon public favour. So much, in a nutshell, for the history of the teacup hurricane; and now for its ethics.

Textually the critic said:

That this was a free country, and, of course, a manager could say precisely what he liked on his own stage. But this was a question of taste. He did not consider it good taste for a manager, who had temporarily lost his temper, to come on the stage and lecture his audience on the rights and wrongs of hissing. The public had a perfect right to express disapprobation, and a manager should accept defeat as complacently as he took victory cheerfully. Nor was it good taste, in his opinion, for an actor, nettled by criticism or comment, to condemn the anonymous writer of an article and class him as a "yellow journalist." Neither did he consider it good taste for an actor visiting another country with a much discussed and brilliant, but eminently debateable, play, openly to boast from the stage that he, who had helped to create "Caste," "Ours," "School"—plays that had never lost their lustre—had brought to America the best play written for the last fifty years.

There is a great deal of truth and many a grain of common sense in these words. Nor can it be said that the critic has overstated his case. If anything, he has understated the wrong of the present state of affairs, which, in the opinion of many, is slowly ripening into an insult to the audience, and certainly to the critics, who are invited and called upon to give a truthful account of their impressions and opinions.

Now-a-days, judging from the attitude assumed by many actors whenever they harangue the crowd after a première, it would seem that the public have no right to express any but a favourable opinion, and that it is the actor who determines the manner in which criticism should be pronounced. In other words, it is no longer the patrons of the drama who give the

law, but the patronised, those who are the hosts to "paying guests," so that the whole system has fallen topsy-turvey. And this is not the only instance of the interference of actor-managers with the rights of the public and the Press. There have been cases in which the police, bamboozled into the belief that there existed "organised opposition," have been called in to eject outspoken playgoers from the gallery. There have been cases where so-called "friends" of the management have been let in by side doors to fill the pit before the box-office opened. There have been cases where an actor publicly apostrophised members of the audience who ventured to disapprove of the entertainment. There have been cases in which "writ and libel" have been swung, like a sword of Damocles, over the heads of the critics; cases of threats to withdraw advertisements and admission to first nights; there was one case in particular, which actually culminated in the ousting of one of the best-known critics from his position on a paper of world-wide circulation.

And what has brought about this deplorable state of things? Is it that our public is too exacting, too irreverent, too tactless when the play fails to please? Is it that our critics are too severe towards the actors? Perish the thought! There is no better, kindlier, more lamb-like, and more faithful public than that of London. In the matter of plays they swallow nearly everything, and, as they see so little which is good, every one-eyed dramatist, every mediocre actor is hailed as a king of his craft—I beg your pardon, I mean of his art. And as for the critics, with one or two exceptions—marked men these!—they are so indulgent, so tender hearted, and so little disposed to find fault, that, when they now and again pronounce a stricture on a leading actor in a less kid-gloved manner than is their wont, there is an outcry, and not infrequently threats of all kinds of terrible managerial chastisement.

Ah, my friends, it is not a bed of roses—the much-coveted office of dramatic critic!

II.

There must be a reason for this strange tyranny of the actor over the two powers that should be his masters instead of his obedient servants. And that reason lies close at hand. The public themselves, and in no lesser degree the modern form of journalism, are the immediate causes of this anomaly. The actors have, in a certain measure, benefited by the natural laws of reaction. Formerly despised and treated as workers in a mean profession, fashion has suddenly willed that the actor should be exalted, because, forsooth, it was discovered that one may be a mummer, yet honourable. Sir Henry Irving—honoured be his name—and his tact!—has done more than any man to raise his fellow-workers from their slough of despond. To him it is due that the theatrical profession to-day, among all except the bigots and the pusillanimous, is as honoured as any other calling. That is as it should be. But since the advent of personal journalism, an innovation for which we have America to thank, the exaltation of the actor has degenerated into something akin to, but less justifiable than, hero-worship. The paragraphist and the interviewer have treated the actor with an amount of attention quite disproportionate to his merits. They have led the public to believe that, not the writer, but the player, is the pillar of theatrical art; they have promoted him to be an oracle on all sorts of questions of public moment about which he has no authority or competency to speak. They have found the most ludicrous detail of an actor's life worthy of million-fold publication in print. And so it comes to this, that to-day the new dress of a "starring" lady, the marriage of a third-rate comedienne, the newly-born babe of a popular actor-manager, the sports and pastimes, the domestic virtues and qualifications, of sundry players, the food they eat, the cigars they smoke, the poodle they lose

(this is a fact!), their jewels that are stolen, the hair-dye with which they rejuvenate themselves, the soap that cleanses them, and the horses that run away with them, are all matters of comment lengthier than is vouchsafed to affairs of State.

Is it then to be wondered at that men and women, following a profession which is ever under the sway of vanity, men and women so adulated, so over-estimated, so spoilt with constant magnifying of their personal attractions, with the brilliant rays of the public "lime-light" and the courtship of stage-struck society,—is it, I ask, to be wondered at that these men and women lose their heads and, which is the present resulting evil, make light of their flatterers? The thing was inevitable.

III.

As the critic cited above so correctly said, there is no desire on anybody's part to curtail the actor's liberties. All we ask for is that he should not interfere with the liberty of his patrons and the critics, who are indirectly appointed and paid by that public to speak the whole truth. It is the actor's and the manager's business to do their work to the best of their ability, and if they feel so inclined, there is no objection to their expressing, after the curtain's fall, their thanks for the praise bestowed on their efforts. The charming little speeches which Sir Henry Irving has time after time delivered before the green baize of the Lyceum, have been models of good taste and a joy to the ear. But the unwritten law which rules all people of good breeding, the law of decorum, emphatically forbids an actor or manager to bandy words with the audience, when the spectators, who have paid, are displeased; to doubt the honesty of an adverse verdict; to pronounce from the footlights a judgment on the play, before the critics, who have been convened for the purpose, have spoken. One might go further and refer to the countless errors of taste which, on the occasion of a success, are committed by the actor who addresses the

public. The speech of the manager who produced "The Gay Lord Quex" at New York, and proclaimed it the best play of the last fifty years, is a case in point. One might also scrutinise the propriety of allowing personal feelings to get the upper hand at convivial gatherings. But all these symptoms, united or viewed by themselves, point to the same issue, which demonstrates that some actors have forgotten the respect they owe to their patrons—the public and the press. In fine, the actor-manager should understand that, high and mighty though he may seem, by the grace of public favour and paragraphic fulsomeness, he ought to obey the same unwritten laws of decorum that bind all men of education. And it is the duty of all earnest critics to hold together and sternly to repress every attempt to interfere with, to undermine, or to impugn their independence.

“LE MONDE OU L'ON S'ENNUIE.”

February 3rd, 1901.

I.

Let us talk about Pailleron's famous comedy which will open the series of THE SUNDAY SPECIAL performances which I have been authorised to offer to our readers. And just to set the ball rolling, permit me to explain why I always use the French title, and studiously avoid to naturalise it as “The World of Boredom.” The fact of the matter is, that the real meaning of “ennui” cannot be rendered by any English word equally significant and equally temperate. For our word “ennui” is not only illegitimate, but it is unfamiliar as well as awkward to pronounce. The real French “ennui” is neither boredom nor tedium; it is a gentle, refined somnolence of interest, something which reminds of a discreet little yawn behind a fan or opera hat. “Ennui” is the boredom of fashionable society, the *faire bonne mine à mauvais jeu* sort of behaviour which we all know so well in this country of sermons, lectures, and conversaziones (to say nothing of mammoth “at homes”), but which no one has as yet crystallised into one genteel and agreeable word. This title, I may as well tell you, has cost Miss Leonard and myself more trouble than the by no means easy task of translating the purposely laboured language of the play.

We have consulted no end of authorities as to the proper rendering of Pailleron's splendid head-line. We have turned up the translation in some fifteen other languages, and everywhere the result was negative. Thus in the end

we resolved to adhere to the French title and to print "The World of Boredom" as a sub-title in small characters. I say small characters, for my intimate acquaintance with the susceptibilities of our public has put me on my guard. I know what the average playgoer thinks when he reads the word "boredom." Woe betide the author and the players when there is the slightest inclination of the text to justify the word; why, the very title would then be sufficient to prejudice the audience, and to jeopardise the fate of the play. Such is the way of the world, and being in this case the advocate of a renowned foreign author, I had not the heart to try to alter it.

Otherwise I entertain not the slightest fear that "Le Monde" will prove anything else but a world of amusement—"Le Monde ou l'on s'Amuse," to quote another play by the same author. Twenty years ago, when the Comédie Française produced the comedy and made its well-known author famous, there rushed a wave of mirth through the world's foremost playhouse, and ere long it flooded France and all the countries of Europe—except ours. Yes, it is gospel truth, for twenty years this brilliant work has been played in every theatre from Palermo to Hammerfest; it has crossed the oceans to Africa and Asia; it has seen some forty editions in the printed form; but no English manager has laid his hand on it. It is the same old story as that of Zola's "Thérèse Raquin," which waited eighteen years for the English stage until the Independent Theatre brought it out; the same old story as that of Dumas' "Denise," which Clement Scott adapted for Sir Augustus Harris, and since has been slumbering on the shelves. Once at the dreariest matinée, I remember, an Oxford professor—or was it Cambridge?—produced a play called "Culture," and, to my horror, I discovered that it was an attempt at anglicising "Le Monde ou l'on s'Ennuie." It missed fire from the start, and it failed dismally, as it deserved. There is such a power as Nemesis in Art, and the learned sinner who trifled with Pailleron's masterpiece found to his cost that you cannot graft the morals and manners of the French upon the British character. In

others words, the play is so intrinsically French that no adaptation will make it English ; translation alone, faithful and reverent, can render it vital on our stage.

II.

I have called the "Monde" a masterpiece, and in doing so I looked backward. Twenty years of life may not tell on men, but they produce wrinkles and crow's feet on the countenance of plays. Poetry, not prose in the language of plays, is, in a certain measure, the passport to immortality. I am, therefore, quite prepared for the obvious criticism that the comedy has aged, that the form is of the same well-constructed manufacture as Sardou's, that its psychology is superficial. All this is quite true, but it must be remembered that "Le Monde" came in 1880, when we had never heard of realism and naturalism on the stage—Zola discussed these matters in his criticisms, but the listeners were few—and when that bugbear of the modern drama, Ibsen, was only a prophet at home, in Holland, and in a few German literary centres. In those days one did not trouble so much about the purposes, the problems, and the intense soulfulness of the plays. One was satisfied with amiable photography, with the thing that is akin to life yet lacks its colour and the spirit. To be amused by a Sardou, to be puzzled by an Alexander Dumas fils, to be harrowed by the melodramas of Father Dennery, that was the playgoer's desire in the eighties ; he was less exigent than we have become. Now that kind of amusement, of which Sardou was at one time the most popular purveyor, was intensified in Pailleron's comedy. It was really a mordant satire, an onslaught on that fossilised aristocracy of the "Faubourg," where the Academy still means immortality, where tragedy must have five acts and Alexandrine verse ; where under the guise of intelligence and breeding, science is adulterated with charlatanism and the greatest humbug becomes the greatest man. In that "Faubourg," so *distingué*, so outwardly cold, so rigid in manner and in thought, there

rages nearly every kind of passion, and under the calmness of the social surface there smoulders the fire of manifold conspiracies. Here all sorts of schemes are laid and hatched. One seeks office, the other the Academy, a third decoration, a fourth promotion, and to obtain their ends, they stoop to the endurance of an *ennui* which would be ludicrous if it were not really contemptible. Pailleron has hit out against these cultured impostors with the robust but innocuous fist of the amateur prize-fighter. He has spared them nothing, for the laughter he elicits is as hearty as it is merciless, but the punishment—to use the sportive term—is so swift and so light that even those against whom he fought came to laugh at their own follies. Moreover, with that nice sense of balance which is the gift of the French playwright, he was careful not to heap lead into one scale and merely feathers in the other. For in the same picture with all these eccentrics, these quacks, snobs, fortune-and-office hunters, these new women and hysteric spinsters, he drew the comely figure of Suzanne de Villiers, the incarnation of winsomeness of “la femme,” the piquant wife of the Vice-Prefect—a little woman, whom I would fain call “a materialised kiss,” and the all-overshadowing personality of the Duchess. The Duchess fills, in Pailleron’s play, the part of the “reasoner,” which one finds in every work of Dumas fils. But Dumas’ reasoners argued over brook and hedge; they argued anything, to paint black white, or *vice versa*. Not so the Duchess. She merely pleads common sense. She has lived and would let others live. She has loved and takes the loving under her wings. She has played her tactful parts in life and she understands the tactitians. She is the most vital character in the play, and thanks to her creation, “Le Monde où l’on s’Ennuie” won in 1880 the distinction of being called the best comedy of the century.

III.

The bright sides of the “Monde” are many—you will presently discover them for yourselves if the efforts of our

actors rise to my expectations—but one of the brightest is its cleanliness in thought and development. To that I ascribe a great measure of its success, for as “Cyrano de Bergerac” was an oasis in the desert of the “Comedie Rosse”—the brutal naturalistic play—Pailleron’s comedy saw the light when the French public were gorged with dramas of adultery and arsenic. One punned in those days “l’arsenique c’est l’art scenique,” and the first writer who came forward with a story unencumbered by marital faithlessness, private dining-rooms with many doors, and suicidal issues, was sure of a hearty reception. The fact that in a modern comedy produced at the Français there was not a breath of impurity, so that, as one used to say then “the mother may safely bring her daughter,” has undoubtedly helped to bring fame to Pailleron’s comedy. It may even be asserted that it led to some exaggeration, as it was voted a classic worthy to rank next to “Mlle. de la Seiglière” and “Le Gendre de M. Poirier” on the bookshelves of college libraries. But indisputable is the fact that now, as two decades ago, the great house in the Rue de Richelieu is ever full from floor to ceiling when “Le Monde” is on the bill; and that in all great cities of Europe its vitality is proved by unceasing revivals. This and my persistent love for this charming child of France’s humour have induced me to test its possibilities on the English stage. If it fails, the defeat will be an honourable one; if it succeeds, as I hope it will, I shall feel fortified in my belief that toiling and waiting will ultimately work wonders for our Drama.

HER MAJESTY'S: "TWELFTH NIGHT."

February 10, 1900.

I.

It is just a question of taste. Personally I am glad that Shakespeare has written other comedies than "Twelfth Night," for, standing on its own merits alone, unsupported by the real masterpieces of the bard, it would neither have become immortal nor rank as a play of great merit; and that notwithstanding the sweet and delicate love-story which the poet has woven into the jester's broadstrained tissue. Somebody—not very familiar with Shakespeare, I suspect—once said in reply to the question how he liked "Twelfth Night": "I think it is full of excellent quotations"—an absurd statement with more truth in it than is to be found in many a wiser phrase. There is no play of our Master in which there are so many happy thoughts, so happily expressed that they have glided through centuries from tongue to tongue; our everyday language, indeed, would have been the poorer if Shakespeare had not amused himself with this somewhat infantile tomfoolery. But, popular as "Twelfth Night" may be in detail, since the mouth of the people is its daily borrower, it is not popular in any other sense, and, without looking up formidable statistics, it is pretty safe to say that the other comedies are far oftener produced all the world over. What may be the cause I can only guess from my own observations, or, rather, my own impressions. Somehow all this much ado around the poor and pompous Malvolio strikes me as

antiquated and not a little unchivalrous. It is not the frank knockabout business of the Punch and Judy show, but it is practical joking with subtle devices and malice aforethought, which even culminates in battered heads. And then it is so terribly long, this funny business, whence our latter-day two Macs have derived their inspiration, that one must have a very juvenile mind not to grow weary. The fact is that nowadays it has become the fashion to prune the serious side of Shakespeare's comedies, and to give the full fledged comic interludes *fortissimo*. They may please some who would sell their birthright for a peal of laughter, but it diminishes the pleasure of others. Give me the fun in measure, I say, and the poetry full length, then I will thank thee; but, really, at Her Majesty's I soon perceived such havoc in the text that I clapped my Temple-Shakespeare to and settled down to fall in with the fun without worrying about the poet. The result was very medicore enjoyment so far as the play was concerned, and gladness that I had read it again before the performance, lest the overwhelming tail of the story should make me lose sight of its curtailed head.

II.

"Twelfth Night" requires comic acting of the very highest order, in spite of most of its humour belonging to low comedy. Mr. Tree has perceived this, and he has provided a cast which, for its all-round excellence, it would be difficult to rival. The Sir Toby of Mr. Lionel Brough, the Sir Andrew of Mr. Norman Forbes, the Feste, the jester, of Mr. Courtice Pounds, and the indefatigable Maria of that sunny actress, Miss Zeffie Tilbury—they were all amazingly good, and they carried their scenes with a tremendous spirit. Mr. Courtice Pounds, in particular, was a jester of the archest kind. He held the reins rather tight at first, but gradually he let go, and when it came to the scene in which he donned the habit and the manner of the

unctuous monk, he was irresistible. Add to that the charm of voice with which he sang two very melodious songs of Mr. Andrew Levey and Mr. Barratt, and you have a creation of high artistic finesse.

Mr. Tree, too, was in his happiest vein. Oh, how right was his friend the enemy, the anonymous writer in the *Daily Mail*, who said that Tree is a greater eccentric comedian than a heroic player. He has qualities in either branch of his art, but as a comedian he towers. Nothing could be more intensely humorous than this tip-top courtier of a Malvolio, with some of the ludicrous ways of the elderly fool, all the graces of the beau and the love-sick swain, and the exquisite pomposity of the gentleman who is more devoted to etiquette than to the Gospel. It is so difficult to play this part well, for all the laughs are against it. It is so easy to overdo the caricature and thereby to undo the character. But Mr. Tree held the golden balance. He was humorous from beginning to end, never flagging, never obtrusive; a Don Quixote inspired by two great humorists—Cervantes and Shakespeare.

III.

With Mr. Tree a young girl, schooled in Mr. Benson's useful company, scored the success of the evening. Miss Lily Brayton is very immature yet, but her Viola might be held up as an example to many actresses of more experience. Here is an actress of whom we shall expect great things. Nature has given her much—sweet features, a winsome personality, a charming and sympathetic voice. But it has given her more than that—something which was very palpable as soon as she had mastered her first scene: Miss Brayton is a worker. She digs and dives into her parts, she seeks light and shadow, she is alive to the quality of her character. That is why she was a womanly Viola and a manly Cesario. In voice and gesture, in manner and in vigour, she held the two characters asunder, and this highly intelligent differ-

entiation accomplished an impersonation of great charm and but few flaws of diction. It is such acting we want to do justice to our national poet. Now let Miss Brayton plough on and keep her head steady in the well-earned shower of praise that will descend on it.

ST. JAMES'S THEATRE: "THE AWAKENING."

A New Play by C. Haddon Chambers.

I.

Mr. Chambers's new play is interesting, and that is 75 per cent. on the safe side in the theatrical battle. The other fourth should be found in the human nature of the characters and in the acting. But as human nature is considered a superfluous drug in the market of the English stage, and almost any travesty of it pays better, the rest of a success depends on the actors. If they understand and sustain the interest awakened by the author, victory is certain and lasting; if they do not, a *succès d'estime* is the author's reward. "The Awakening" has succeeded because the interpretation was on a level with the play, and the author told his story with much intensity. Had he but remained true to nature, instead of speculating all the time on chances for dramatic scenes, he might have written a great play. The subject lent itself to it, for the bachelor of thirty, the man drifting like a coveted piece of wreckage on an ocean wholly matrimonial, is a creature of fascination so long as audiences are composed of anxious mothers and marriageable daughters, of widows and divorcées. Be he ever so wicked, be he a Don Juan or a Lothario, a butterfly and a heart-breaker in one binding, he will enjoy a certain amount of feminine sympathy, as the adventuress always touches a tender spot in the feeling of men. It is very hard on the immaculate that it should be so, but that's the way we are built. Now Mr. Chambers's bachelor is a

hardened philanderer in Eve's garden. He has plucked right and left, and numerous are the crushed petals left behind on his path. He is by no means a wicked man, not a sinner by power of will, but an *amoureux* by temperament. It is said of him in the play that "he falls in love with every pretty face he meets." That is his foible and his excuse—in the eyes of the world, where there are many like him. Of course, his fate stays him at last, and it happens that, where a woman would have been ostracised and socially killed, he earns a priceless reward for his peccadilloes. For such is the rule in our little planet: Cruel to women, clement to men. A young girl crosses his path, a typical maiden of home-bred virtue, and she loves this gay deceiver, and she wins him body and soul, crushing in her triumph another heart that had been all his own. True, the course of this love does not run smooth at first; the mistress is not inclined to give in, she is ready to fight; and she does fight so well that, when the orange-blossom girl learns how wicked an unmarried man can be, her virginal soul shrinks from one so polluted. However, since the first version of "The Profligate" was written in 1889, we have become more forgiving to men with a past. And all's well that ends well, albeit that the happy solution is brought about by playwrights' trickery.

II.

The first two acts of Mr. Chambers's play are excellent. They are nearly as well built as the best work of the school which was founded by Sardou and Dumas the younger. The characters are neatly individualised, the comedy is amusing and dotted with witty spots; the language, perhaps, is a little bald, but it will serve. Until well nigh the end of the second act one is led to expect great things. We see how the dawn of a new life gradually prepares the awakening of the philanderer's soul. We are anxious as to how things will develop, for the knots are well tied, and it will demand great skill on the part of the

author to undo their tangle. Then, in the midst of our breathlessness, when the bachelor stands between the two fires of the mistress and the loving maiden, we, as well as he, receive the first douche. The mistress was married, we learn suddenly, and a telegram announces her husband's death in Africa. "Free!" she exclaims, "Will you marry me?" This is very sudden indeed, and when he says "No"—in polite language—we anticipate what will happen, but we do not quite like the preparation for it. In the next act—dramatically the act of the play—comes the crucial scene, and again the author takes us by storm and shatters all our conceptions of logic and decorum. The mistress—a titled lady, mind you—pays a call to the fiancée, who, like the good girl she is, lives in a cottage with an elderly duenna. There she paints, and dreams of her lover. There is nothing extraordinary in the lady's call, for the two are on visiting terms; but what is striking and not a little contrary to good taste is the impertinent cross-examination by which the mistress persecutes her rival. On the stage that sort of thing tells, in life it would revolt us. However, thus the *scene-à-faire* is ushered in, and now the two women fight an angry duel, which culminates in another awakening. The girl's eyes—which are very much closed for her age—are opened to the wickedness of bachelors' ways, and, full of love as she was before, so unforgiving has she become now that the man of her heart is unhaloed. Mind, it is not compassion for the heart-broken widow that moves her; no, it is—to express it in one word—the discovery that her lover is "defiled." For her rival she has but anger and contempt; perhaps jealousy, too, swells her bosom, but the nobler feeling that should have governed her is stifled by egotism. That is why we do not love her nor believe in her angelic nature when she jilts her lover and invokes Scripture and her dead father; the scene is fine, the situation poignant, the tension forcible, but the basis is wrong. It is excellent stage-drama, but life is otherwise.

Having gone so far and desiring a happy ending at all cost, the author must willy-nilly manufacture a solution

when really there is none. In the fourth act, which contains a delightful little love scene between a bashful middle-aged nobleman and a very enterprising young lady who courts his heart and his coronet, the author throws all probability overboard. A telegram saying that her *fiancé* is dangerously ill, although he is, as a matter of fact, only suffering from heartache, brings the good British maiden back to him and reason. Far from being shocked by the discovery that, to his other sins, he adds that of trifling with the truth, she forgives him and forgets; and, having politely bowed out the ex-mistress, who will seek solace in travel, she falls into the practised arms of the reformed Don Juan.!

III.

There is so much that is good in Mr. Chambers's play that one regrets its not being better. With a little disregard for a long run, and more regard for truth and depth instead of false brilliancy and superficiality, he would have marked his record as a playwright. As it is, "The Awakening" stands above "Captain Swift," "The Idler," "John o'Dreams," and all the other drawing-room melodramas of this author. But it belies the promise contained in "The Tyranny of Tears" that Chambers would abandon the artificial style for the progressive method of reproducing life in a temperate and realistic manner. And that is a great pity.

PRINCE OF WALES' THEATRE: "PEG
WOFFINGTON,"

A Play in Three Acts, Adapted from Charles Reade's Novel.

February 17, 1901.

I.

"Peg Woffington" has come back to us with the old masks and new faces. The well-worn mask has grown somewhat wrinkly; there are crows' feet on its texture, and the modernising facial massage of the adapter has scarcely had any perceptible effect. It would indeed have been wiser to let well alone, and to have given us the same version which made Lady Bancroft and others famous; for, somehow, tinkering does no good to these roughly hewn but powerful pieces of the bygone mid-century. They are not as elastic and, therefore, not so compressible as the classics, for the style of the dialogue is by no means philosophic, but merely dramatic, which implies that "cutting" may impair clearness without producing a tenser, a more gripping action. This refers especially to the present version of "Masks and Faces." What has been done to it I do not precisely know; perhaps I myself am less romantically inclined than I was ten years ago, when I saw the play for the last time; perhaps the actors handled the material more forcibly then; perhaps the somewhat infantile construction of the play has been knocked out of joint by the influence of the younger generation. At any rate, as far as I am concerned, the tears are squashed out of Peg's senti-

mentality and Triplet's lamentations. The dialogue has no longer any firm hold upon us, we do not care for phrases any more, we want either the extreme polish of refined conversation or the natural manner of speech that gushes from the lips, disdaining all carefully meditated manufacture. And yet, suffered as it has from the effects of old age and new ideas, how interesting this old work still is in parts. There is an air of grace and courtliness about it, there is a prismatic variety in the character of Peg and a touch of bonhomie in that "great unacted" playwright Triplet, which will ever retain a fascination. And in the homilies preached by the author through his automatons to the dramatic profession there is many a passage which retains its sap of vitality, since it is as true to-day as it was fifty years ago.

II.

None of the Pegs which I have seen approached greatness, so Miss Marie Tempest need not fear odious comparisons. To all intents and purposes her interpretation was a novelty to me, and if it would be hyperbolical to say that she realised my ideal of the part, I can own with gladness that she neither belied her recent promise as a *comédienne* nor my expectations. Of course Miss Tempest has a terrible foe to face on her first appearance. There she stood, little woman, fresh from the airiest form of stage-work, in the shoes of a Marie Wilton, a Madge Kendal, a Bernard-Beere, facing countless critical eyes, every one of which must recall the vision of her predecessors. No wonder that she was nervous, no wonder that the first few scenes wobbled and vacillated, that now and again the words halted in her throat. But still, through that tissue of nervousness there peered the right conception of the part. She was, forgive the vulgarity—"all there," the ex-orange wench promoted to glory by right of conquest, with manners forced upon her which were not of her world, and smiles upon her lips which were dictated by form, not by the heart; an arch little person with the

cunning miniature countenance of a gamin, the caprices of a vixen, and the heart of a child. Marie Tempest's emotional power as an actress does not as yet travel far; it is a deep level, as they would say in the language of the miners, but it is there, and it will solely depend on her and her stage manager to extract the precious metal from it. Thus, Miss Tempest was, perhaps, least effective in the dramatic scenes, and, indeed, in some the innate sweetness, the winsome voice and personality of Miss Susan Sheldon (Mrs. Vane) overpowered her. But in the lighter scenes the newest Peg was excellent; she is spontaneously gay, and, when it comes to saying pointed things, Marie Tempest knows how to use her tongue as a lash. It was on the whole a creditable performance, not on the same level as Nell Gwyn, for that was a character exceptionally suited to the *comédienne*, but marking great progress in the discrimination between operatic comicality and the soberer vein of the drawing-room play. Mr. Ben Webster was acceptable as Pomander—I can say no more, for the character is featureless; and Mr. Frank Cooper, a well-nourished, vigorous Triplet, whose pocketing of the biscuits for the “starving children” struck a note of humour instead of pathos, merely walked and wailed through his part without eliciting or deserving any sympathy. The rest of the caste was respectable without achieving any individual distinction. That again may be the fault of the play or, perhaps, of our modernity, for so changed are the times that the musical illustrations of the text, which used to be considered as indispensable comrades of melodrama, now merely tended to distract our attention; this is all the more regrettable since Mr. Landon Ronald's interesting composition was well worthy of a better cause.

COURT THEATRE: "A CIGARETTE MAKER'S
ROMANCE,"

By Charles Hannan, from Marion Crawford's Novel.

February 17, 1901.

I.

Among the well-wishers of that delicate artist, Mr. Martin Harvey, I claim a conspicuous place, for I believe in his fine poetic style and his lofty ambitions. But Mr. Harvey, like many managers of theatres and other places, suffers from the peculiar malady which is refinedly called "uxoriousness"—a malady so acute that it is but curable by drastic measures, lest its chronic state should become a costly luxury.

"Uxoriousness," not to mince matters, is to force one's wife or leading lady into characters which are unsuited to her talent and her personality; on the face of it, a manager being as free a man as any other, these experiments are no concern of the critic, but when the plays suffer, and when the acting in general suffers through the interpretation of the leading female part, then, I think, it is our duty to sound a warning note.

In saying this I am moved by no animosity whatever against leading ladies in general or Mrs. Harvey in particular. On the contrary, I have admired her very much in that thumbnail of a character-sketch in "The Only Way," which could not have been played better. But in "Don Juan's Last Wager," which owed half of its failure to the fact that Miss de Silva (Mrs. Harvey) had

neither the pathos nor the dramatic power to realise the maidenly portrait of Soledad, and now again in "A Cigarette Maker's Romance," there is so much evidence of the play being weakened by the actress that silence would be dishonest criticism. Martin Harvey himself, whose work is as gauze-like and as tender as a piece of Bruges lace (Harvey ever reminds me of Bruges-la-Morte and the artistic spirits of bygone days that seem to float in its hazy sky), Harvey is paralysed by the insufficient response that comes to him from his partner, whom, in this play, he is to woo and to win after hot strife and sacrifice. I do not say that Miss de Silva has no good moments—she has them, indeed, and sometimes a sentence or an attitude struck by her is unique in its tender ingenuity. For Miss de Silva has great artistic instinct, if she is not a great actress. But what one feels all the time is that she is not the right woman in the right place. There is manner, but no heart; there is effort, but no result; there is grace, but no palpitation. And under this impression languor descends upon play and actors alike, and the evening crawls wearily along in unprofitable outlay of energy.

II.

The play is not good; all that was Crawford's is gone, and what remains is long-winded melodrama none too comprehensively unfolded. But fine acting—acting with *panache*—could have disguised many shortcomings, for Mr. Charles Hannan has the instinct, if not the craftsmanship, of a dramatist. If only some firm and practised hand had guided Mr. Hannan, told him what use to make of the strange case of loss of memory with which he deals, instructed him how to distribute the interest and how to bridle verbosity, "A Cigarette Maker's Romance" might have been a poignant melodrama. As it stands, it is crude and noisy, never heartrending or even thrilling, evoking very little sympathy for the browbeaten cigarette-maker, who is really a Russian Count, or for the weak little woman whom he wants to raise from cigarette-rolling at Nuremberg

to sledging á la Daumont on the Neva. That these questions of mnemonic failing are always very difficult to treat on the stage I know full well, since I once produced a play on this subject by Michael Field; and even Sardou, that master-dramatist, suffered defeat with his "Spiritisme," of which he expected an unprecedented success. The fact is that the stage lends itself unwillingly to the demonstration of psychological problems, of which the average playgoer, being untrained in medical science, has but a haphazard conception, or none at all. And where there is no comprehension, it is extremely difficult to create interest.

The frame of Mr. Hannan's play is engaging enough. What could be comelier to our imagination than the old-world town of Nuremberg, quaint and almost mediæval this very day? But, curiously, in his dialogue Mr. Hannan has strangely contrasted modernity with the costumes of the Waterloo period. He speaks of "marks" (adopted in 1874) instead of "gulden," and one actually hears on the stage the famous "Fatinitza Marsch" ("Du bist verrueckt, mein Kind, Du musst nach Berlin") in an age when its composer, Franz von Suppé, had only just seen the light!

COMEDY: "DIE SCHMETTERLINGSSCHLACHT."

A Comedy in Four Acts, by H. Sudermann.

February 17, 1901.

I.

Sudermann would have enjoyed it. How they laughed, listened breathlessly, wiped away a tear, clapped their hands, broke out in vociferous bravos! It was a memorable evening, and the honours were equally shared between the author and the actors. About the latter something is said in another column, for I prefer not to blow the trumpet of the little battalion I have the honour to lead. But with the play I will deal, for there I stand on neutral ground, and it is a labour of love to write about work that provokes so many thoughts.

"The Battle of the Butterflies," when it came into the world, was received with mingled feelings. Berlin, never very kind to subtle humour, hissed; Vienna, the Kaiserstadt, jubilated. Then the tide turned in Germany, and now it is pretty well agreed that this comedy, with its touch of grimness, stands high, almost topmost, in Sudermann's remarkable series of plays.

Why Berlin was inclined to be unkind to "Die Schmetterlingsschlacht" is fairly plain, for the picture of Berlin middle-class life which it unveils is more faithful than flattering, more caustic than pleasing. It is human not to like to see oneself as other people see us.

And yet how graphically has the author, in stating one case, laid bare the miseries, the humorous miseries of

thousands. Here is a widow with some sort of a title; her husband was a Custom House officer, she is therefore "Frau Custom House officer." The prefix is long, the pension small, the position shabby-genteel. There are three daughters; they all help a little to keep the pot a-boiling by painting butterflies on fans—three woman with three distinct temperaments. The eldest, a widow, secretly seeking consolation in the addresses of a most matter-of-fact "commis-voyageur," but openly betrothed, for pity's sake as it were, to the son of a miserly rich relation, who is no mate for her. The second daughter, a business-like, calculating sort of a girl, who would not scorn unlicensed wedlock provided there were coin, and, in preference, a title-bearer attached to it. The third, sweet sixteen with all the romantic flights, the beautiful thoughts, the tender-heartedness inseparable from that blissful age. The mother, a docile beast of burden ever since she, years ago, went to the altar, lives with and for those three. She has but one ambition—the ambition of all middle class mothers—to marry the girls as quickly as can be, by fair means or foul. And so this poor drudge stints herself in every way, in order that the girls may look nice; and so she baits men and talks of her woes and her daughters to them, and so she descends unwittingly, with the best of intentions, to all those tricks and accommodations which, in a person less well-meaning, one would label with an ugly name.

All this is interspersed with humour, so that the breath of unpleasantness, which threatens to come in and cling to the story, is swiftly dispelled. But underneath the smiles and the satire there lurks the struggle of life—the tragedy of homes unnumbered in every city of the world.

II.

Sudermann, who is a man with a big heart and a great sense of humour, has been careful not to intensify the tragedy. He only just suggests the possibilities of what might happen in such homes of many daughters and small

means. Before things take too disastrous a turn, he outwardly rights matters by marrying the romantic little girl to the young man who was willy-nilly affianced to the older sister, and hints that ere long the mother will now no further trouble her head with "What are we to do with our daughters?" For the eldest will probably marry her lover, and the remaining one is on fair road to "land" a count. Nor is the issue the material part of the play. Its strength lies in the characterisation, in the wonderful atmosphere, in the language. Everything that happens is as natural as life itself; and if there were not that little twist of convention at the end which turns the hard-hearted miser into a being more humane, one would fain say, this play is no play at all, it is a "slice of humanity" carved from the world we live in, and placed on the pedestal of the stage for our edification. For this is certain: never has Sudermann written a story so un-theatrical, yet so dramatic, in a language so faithfully gathered and transplanted from the human lips. The language—which is everything, the story, the characters and all—is the great merit of this remarkable play. In moulding it, Sudermann has not only found the form which is effective by its sound, but by its intrinsic appositeness to the situation. In other words, his characters speak the language of the human tongue, and, hearing them, we are at once captivated, as if we were no longer mere listeners, but companions in their midst. A play of such qualities ranks high in dramatic literature, and although Sudermann has done work more popular both with the crowd at home and across the oceans, he has written none which reflects greater credit on his powers. When "Die Ehre" is obsolete, "Magda" antiquated, and others forgotten, "Die Schmetterlingsschlacht" will still retain its vitality. For in this play and in "Das Glueck im Winkel" the author has given his best—his intellect and his inspiration.

GARRICK: REVIVAL OF "PERIL."

February 24, 1901.

Mr. Joseph Knight in two anonymous criticisms of undoubted parentage—for his manner of saying positive things in a qualified negative form is unique—takes me somewhat unkindly to task. Mr. Knight notes with dissatisfaction my comments on Dr. Sebastian Evans' inartistic adaptation of Pailleron's masterpiece, and queries my tact in "belittling" the work of a predecessor. My respect for my veteran fellow-critic forbids my answering him in the same acrid language with which he sounds the sole note of discord on the moral victory of his younger colleague. Nor do I feel inclined to bandy words or to defend my own work. Mr. Knight's remarks are acknowledged here solely because they give me a welcome opportunity to make a few remarks which, now that faithful translation from the French has at last broken the old fallacy that adaptation is the only bridge between the stage of France and ours, should not be out of place.

In most countries the system of adaptation is entirely unknown; in fact, when, fifteen years ago, I came to my adopted Fatherland, intimately acquainted with the theatre of all Europe except England, I was positively horrified to discover how cruelly foreign plays were maimed by our managerial bespoke tailors, who, vainly, called themselves dramatic authors. In my then juvenile indignation I could but recall two crimes equal to the emasculation of a foreign author's work—the one was Herostrat's arson of Jerusalem's temple, the other the unspeakable outrage upon human nature practised by Turks

and other Eastern barbarians. Time and its invaluable footman, calmness, have of course, assuaged my volcanic anger. But even to-day, familiar as I am with all the practices and malpractices on our stage, I cannot admit that adaptation, as it is done here, is a legitimate and honest form of art. When a once famous dramatist flowered his button-hole with a cyanided carnation, there was a great outcry, because to doctor a flower is to pervert nature. Now I ask, what is the difference between defacing a carnation and a man's play, often the pick of his brain's flower-basket? For the life of me I can see none at all, or, if there is any, the wilful tampering with the play is even worse, for the result is generally unsatisfactory and useless into the bargain. I say generally, for there are, of course, plays written in such a form that they have no national characteristics of style and figures at all, so that a mere change of *locale* and of names renders them suitable to all civilized peoples on the globe. But they are the exceptions; the rule is that, every nation having a form of expression, manners, morals, even a code of honour and etiquette of its own, the attempt to force characters into the skin of another nationality is indictable. It reminds one forcibly of that mythological ruffian, the giant Procrustes, who had one and the same bed for all his captives. When they were too short, their members were stretched until they fitted exactly to the frame, and when they were too long, he chopped a few inches off his victims' legs.

All our adaptors are not as cruel as Procrustes; some, indeed, are well meaning, and fairly skilful—Sydney Grundy, for instance, whose "Pair of Spectacles" was so well "Englished" that the real father, Labiche, was wiped out by the adaptor. But the majority are entirely unscrupulous, and as they do not even care to study the characters of the people whom they naturalize, their patch-work ends in being neither fish, flesh, nor good red herring. And, after all, is it not obvious that adaptation can never obliterate its origin? Take an example from life. A man is born abroad, where he spends his tender years,

receives his education, and acquires the peculiarities of his race. He then migrates and settles in a foreign land. If he is intelligent, he may soon learn the language—even to perfection. He will adopt the style of dress and address of his adopted country. He will conform to all customs and manners, and, as it were, regenerate his entire nature. Yet until his dying day there will remain a little something—oh! such a little breath of accent in his speech—that will betray his foreign birth. It is not to his discredit, for he has worked for the best with all his might; it is simply a law of nature. The French put it so tersely in a pretty little proverb: “*Bon chien chasse de race.*” And that is why adaptation, however deftly done, remains as spurious an article as the good folk who at home have been christened, say, Freudenstein, and in England would call themselves Gladstone.

II.

The combination of these remarks on adaptation, as a form of the drama, with a few critical notes on the revival of “*Peril*,” *née* “*Nos Intimes*” of Sardou, does not imply a stricture on the work done by Clement Scott and B. C. Stevenson nearly twenty years ago. In those days adaptation was the order of the day, and it was even considered extraordinarily honourable that the translators condescended to acknowledge the paternity of Monsieur Victorien Sardou. For as a rule one stole, lived by spoil, gathered “*kudos and sponduliks*” without even so much as mentioning the foreign fountain-head. Moreover, turning my opera glasses backward to 1885, and adjusting them accordingly, I think that the work was well done. “*Peril*” was a cleansed and whitewashed edition of Sardou’s famous play; and, if in the tub some of the gloss had been rubbed off, there remained that air of safeguarded respectability which was then dear to all Britons, and is still a passport to the patronage of the public that devours penny stories, Mr. Charles Sheldon, and the local circulating library.

But Ibsen—I am sorry to have to drag him in—and the simple methods introduced by him have scythed down all that artificiality with which master-magician Sardou bamboozled and thrilled the world. To-day we laugh at his devices, as he himself must have laughed at Scribe and his heavy bag of tricks. Why, the very scene on which “Peril” hangs—the balcony scene, with Dr. Thornton wordily explaining the opening of the hard-stoppered bottle, in order that the lover should have a chance to jump twelve feet and sprain his wrist—is no longer dramatic. It is conjurer’s work, worthy of Carl Hertz or Verbeck. And the doctor’s skilful dealings *à la minute* with the overturned chairs and pulled-down bell-cord, that is like Paul Cinquevalli in his perilous feat of throwing up a heavy bullet and catching it in the nape of his neck at the risk of severing the vital muscle. From A to Z there is not one ounce of human nature in “Peril.” There are amusing episodes—as, for instance, the preposterous and grasping behaviour of the guests at the breakfast-table—but they are caricatures. There are sensational scenes, to wit, when the amorous captain makes a “dead set” for his hostess; but they do not appeal to our feelings, because they are stagily evolved. And, to my mind, the incident just referred to, acted as it is now, is not a little improper; it is not a whit less shocking than the notorious scene in “Mr. and Mrs. Daventry,” only the latter is realistic and the other theatrical manufacture pure and simple.

No, we have ceased to admire the acrobatic adroitness and the hair-splitting ingenuity of “Nos Intimes,” which once upon a time hypnotised the public. Our eyes have been opened since; our horizon is wider, and even the author’s wit and his occasional touches of keen observation do not redeem a shoddy network of wild improbabilities.

III.

Plays like “Peril” used to make actors, now they threaten to unmake them. Here and there a French

actress of genius may still whip the dead horse into life and herself into such frenzies that the audience is carried away. But our players are not equal to these superhuman efforts. That they strove hard no one will deny, but only two reached the high mark of spirit: Mr. Fred Kerr (the late Mr. Daventry), whose transformation from young into old was as marvellous as his splendid portrayal of nervous and cantankerous Anglo-Indian senility; and young Mr. R. C. Hertz, whose Eton boy, full of clever quips and pranks and a face as mobile as a kaleidoscope, should at once lay a solid basis for his future career. The gaiety of the evening was theirs. Among the others, some did not understand their parts, like Mr. Brandon Thomas, who made the husband all too silly, and Miss Marguerite Aubert, a very tame little *femme-de-chambre*. Yet this is a role in which reputations have been made. Miss Lily Grundy as the *ingenue* was pleasant and comely. Mr. Leonard Boyne had all the good-natured bluffness of an experienced country doctor, but as the *raisonneur* of the play, with long and brilliant dissertations on everything and everybody, he lacked just that dash which should be the all-conquering gift of the theatrical *deus ex machina*. Mr. Graham Browne, the lover, in a part as difficult as it is thankless, displayed nice discretion, but no valour. He too, was crushed by the artificiality of the play.

I now come to Miss Violet Vanbrugh, who gradually assumes a striking resemblance to Jane Hading. Fortunately she has more temperament, but less mannerisms, than her French sister, although in all probability Mdlle. Hading, whom I faintly remember in this play, was more effective in "Nos Intimes" than Miss Vanbrugh in "Peril." Explosive art, such as is demanded in the balcony scene of "Nos Intimes," is the peculiar domain of French actresses. That is why Miss Vanbrugh should not strain her powers by imitation. She is a woman of great prepossessing qualities; her personality is distinct, her manner distinguished, her style of speech telling. If Miss Vanbrugh were properly led, if she would forsake

the drama purely commercial for the drama artistic with commercial possibilities, she would rise high. The brain is there and the heart too, but great emotional power does not necessarily warrant success in Sardou's torpedo scenes. Nor was her manager (and husband) wise to let her toy with these destructive things. What Miss Vanbrugh should play is Ibsen's "Nora" and "Hedda," Sudermann's Marikke in "Johannisfeuer," Denise of Dumas fils (Mr. Scott has a version), a great Pinero woman like Paula Tanqueray or Agnes Ebbsmith. But on old-fashioned Sardou she is wasted. All this implies that in my humble opinion there is talent of the finest assay in Miss Vanbrugh, but it requires careful coinage; and no matter how well she acts in machine-made plays, she will not draw the town until she is endowed with a part which is akin to her nature. It is not for me to determine whether my suggestion is worthy of consideration; perhaps the fate of "Peril" may belie me and fill the house a hundred nights. But I doubt it. New men have invaded the old acres, and much of yesterday's craftsmanship is to-day obsolete.

A HINT TO MÆCENAS.

March 3, 1901.

I.

I fear that Agnes, Mrs. Ebbsmith who did, will have to wait till next week, for I am in Paris, and the wonderful city holds me spellbound. One drinks intelligence here, and it is a much finer stimulant than absinthe. Even the afternoons have lost their dulness; there is art working in all these little side-theatres, which hold, say, 150 to 200 people, and for every five francs spent on the hour's performance one brings home a louis in golden grains of *esprit*. Then, at night, the theatres are splendidly equipped just now. On my arrival last Wednesday my eye fell on the bill of the Comédie Française, and what do you think I read? Revival of "Le Monde ou l'on s'Ennuie." It was too good to be lost, so, after galloping through a dinner, I hurried off to the rue de Richelieu. I had no time for reminiscences, for the contemplation of the wonderful reproduction of the old house. And once more the ever young comedy riveted my attention as if it were born but yesterday, and every arrow of wit hit the black spot right in the centre. What would one not have given to father one such play and then never to write again.

But would Pailleron have been pleased if he had been present? I doubt it. The pick of the basket is gone, Samary, Reichemberg, Montaland, Worms, Febvre,—gone all the great ones who lifted the great play to the skies! Blanche Pierson is fine as the Duchess, Muller also as Jeanne (although Agnes Miller is every inch her equal);

Prudhon is an unctuous but rather vulgar Bellac; the rest is silence. Our Nina Boucicault positively effaces her French rival, Mdle. Lara. For Miss Boucicault has the *cri du cœur*, and the other lady merely recites. On the whole our performance was better, strange though it may sound, and I am more than ever convinced that "Le Monde" will render Pailleron famous in London, as it has endowed him with immortality in Paris.

At the Vaudeville "Robe Rouge," still flourishes, a play by the young Master, Brioux, who also has a piece at Antoine's called "Les Remplaçantes." He is a thinker and a powerful dramatist. At the Gymnase, Lucien Besnard, who was for years my editor-in-chief of *La Revue d'Art Dramatique*, has scored with his powerful socialistic play, "Le Domaine"; at the Odéon, Bisson, a farce-writer as a rule, is a fixture with his delightful "Chateau Historique," which Frohman will anon present in London. And so I might continue, and every impression recorded, aye, every title written down, is a testimony to the colossal brain of the Ville Lumière.

II.

And now for the purpose of this lengthy preface. It is almost obvious. One cannot refrain from comparing, and on the one side one is tempted to envy, the wealth of Paris, while on the other London's poverty stares one in the face. We may talk as we will, but the fact remains that we are mere mendicants in stageland, we poor Londoners, who pay so dearly for our poor fare. And what is done in our country, so noble, so charitable, so munificent; what is done in high quarters, and in rich quarters, and in literary quarters, and in talking quarters, such as the theatrical clubs, to relieve our needs? Nothing. Words are profuse, deeds nowhere. And to make matters worse, some clown talks of art being the curse of the drama. It is a fine state of affairs.

Everywhere else in the old world the drama is cultivated, honoured, fostered; countries pay, cities pay,

princes pay, and private people too. Here the public merely subsidises personal vanity represented by actor-managerdom. Meanwhile art goes to Hades, and when at dinner-tables the most lamb-like playgoer wails that "there is no good new piece going in London," and when the professional diner laments over his champagne, you may feel pretty sure that the plaint is well-founded, for he is an optimist. The fact of the matter is we have no playwrights, I mean in proportion to the vastness of our domains and the enormous spread of our language. What is one Jones, one Pinero, one Grundy, one Carton, one Shaw, one Marshall, one Chambers, for an Empire where the sun never sets? I can name you five Frenchmen, five Germans, three Italians, and three Scandinavians against every one of these, and with a record not one whit inferior. No, it cannot be repeated often enough; we have a dearth of playwrights, and we do nought to attract and to train zealous aspirants. As playwrights are not born in our land, we must make them by education. We train painters and musicians, we train actors—in an infantile manner as yet, but there is a school or two; we train authors and journalists with the help of our Mammoth press, but no one has ever thought of inducing or furthering the study of the dramatist's craft.

III.

After the diagnosis, the remedy. It lies close at hand; it is as obvious as the egg of Columbus. How do motherly foreign states develop the imagination of their painters and musicians? They let them enter into competitions, and those whose work excels receive purses to travel abroad in the lands of Rembrandt, of Velasquez, of Raphael, of Memlinck, of Durer; on their return an account must be rendered of their studies, and each student has to show proof that he has neither idled nor merely philandered in the artistic cities where he has lived in comfortable independence. The fact that the practice increases, that the purses are augmented from year to

year, proves how beneficial this liberal education is. A widened horizon is the father of a fertile imagination.

The course is, therefore, clear. Every year a competition should be opened for, say, ten aspirant-dramatists who have already given some evidence of dramatic instinct, be it by the production or by the publication of plays—in one act or more. The only other qualification should be a fair knowledge of French and German. As the applicants would be numerous, a ballot should designate the ten men or women to be endowed. To each of these one would say: "Here are a hundred pounds, pack your traps, start for Paris, live there six months, go to the theatre as often as you can, and carefully record your impressions. Then, again, set out and spend the rest of the year in the three great artistic centres of Germany; three months in Berlin, two in Munich, one in Hamburg. On your return to England you will be provided with another fifty pounds to retire into the country, where at your leisure you shall execute the one condition of your bond, the creation of a play of modern life in not less than three acts. That play will be submitted to a small reading committee composed of, say, a critic, an actor, and a manager (who does not act); if your play is in any way practicable, it will be produced with no expense to yourself, and if it proves successful it will remain your entire property after deduction of ten per cent., wherewith to endow other aspirants."

Now, here is a plan which, I submit with all modesty, is perfectly feasible and full of promising possibilities. Nor is it an expensive project either, for if ten candidates are chosen and ten plays produced, a mere three thousand pounds would suffice for the first year's experiment. And this sum is but a trifle in excess of the money *wasted* on each of the countless failures of every London season. In the first instance the creation of such purses should be the business of the Government or (why not?) of the County Council. But our *patres conscripti* are not conspicuous by their love for the stage, so the appeal may more fitly go forth to private individuals, many of whom

have extended a generous hand to the arts of painting and of music. It is a splendid opportunity for any man who wishes to render a real service to a moribund art. Nor can I conceive that his munificence would be barren, for, unless the young generation is entirely blunted by the materialism of the times, the acquaintance with the flourishing dramatic art in the two great neighbouring countries must stimulate the ardour of the student, to say nothing of his imagination.

Three thousand pounds, and less if the number is to be reduced, is all that is wanted. A pittance to a Mæcenas, or to those who have been faithful followers of our Mascot, my friend the Magpie. Allons, Messieurs, faites votre jeu. It is for the welfare of England's drama. Don't let the little tambourine go by!

ROYALTY: REVIVAL OF PINERO'S "THE NOTORIOUS MRS. EBBSMITH."

March 10, 1901.

I.

Agnes Ebbsmith, faddist, like many other members of the "Fair sex," is not consistent. After having sick-nursed Lucas Cleeve so well that mutual love is the not unnatural result of her Samaritanism, she joins him in unregistered wed-lock. For months he, the aristocrat with democratic notions, and she, the mob-orator with new-womanlike ideas of emancipation, have spent a happy life unspoiled by the untidiness of the lady and the marital ties of the man. Then suddenly, while they are living in the splendour of a Venetian Palazzo, a single remark of Lucas that he has bought a gorgeous décolleté dress for his queen—still slovenly in her dress and more or less unkempt—produces a reaction in her. And when—fie, Lucas!—the still invalided lover expresses a not unusual desire for food, Agnes is convinced that he is no better than the first husband, that he is of the flesh fleshly, and does not believe in platonic love of the soul. The situation is queer and delicate, and it is not quite a dramatic critic's work to unravel it. But for the life of me I cannot understand Mrs. Ebbsmith's sudden access of prudishness after some months of concubinage. However, that may be womanly, and in addition it is the bridge over which the author will gently move the prospective solution of the play. This incipient disinclination of Agnes to con-

tinue the life she has been leading—a very respectable life minus a weddinglicense—promptsher to call in the old cynic—the Duke of St. Olpherts, Lucas's uncle—a man of the world, a *roué*, a beau, and a good advocate of bad causes. He is the *raisonneur*, the author's main switch, which controls the whole play, and, according to its motion, can make or unmake the heroine. Of course, the heroine must be doomed. For this is a British, a respectable play, and we can't have Agnes and Lucas nestling cosily and happily somewhere in an ivy-grown cottage off the main road, in defiance of propriety, the registrar, and the parson. Mr. Pinero apparently does not like bowing to convention; one feels that all through the last act, which sounds as false as a piano out of tune (fancy Mrs. Cleeve proposing to Agnes a little *ménage à trois*—merely intellectual!). One feels it also in the now notorious Bible incident. Agnes, untrained in the right understanding, has never been able to find her way in the maze of the two Testaments. The Book of Books has afforded her no solace, so, when the good clergyman, who is somewhat less orthodox than stage clerics usually are, leaves her a copy as a parting gift, she flings it into the fire. There is no reason why she should do it but she does it; it is an excellent stage-effect, if nothing else. The incident might therewith be regarded as closed. Agnes has done what the witch in Fitger's famous German play has perpetrated before her. But wait! yonder in the distance, in the nebulous court of Stable-yard, walks a destroyer, the Censor; he will not license a play in which the Bible is outraged. If the effect is to pass, penance must be done, and thus Agnes reopens the stove, rescues the volume from the flames and clasps it to her breast. In her effort, her fingers are severely scorched; that is the ransom paid to conscience for having played with fire.

II.

It is deplorable that the bogey-man of Stable-yard is ever menacing like a sword of Damocles our authors when they approach greatness. In "The Notorious Mrs. Ebb-

smith," Mr. Pinero made a bid for the highest, and up to a certain point he came within measurable distance of a splendid achievement. Agnes Ebbsmith may be inconsistent, Lucas may be weak, but nevertheless they are vital creatures, and they stand before us in that plastic individuality of form which divides the art of playwriting from the mere craft. If Mr. Pinero could but have had his own way, he would have built a fine tragedy around these two creatures, thrown together by fate, then cut asunder because in the woman pity was stronger than love, and in the man the fleshly element mightier than the intellectual affinity. We should have seen the slow but sure operation of the law of change. However, in the third act, convention, ushered in by the Duke of St. Olpherts, asserts itself vehemently. Instead of making for the inevitable tragedy, we make for the happy ending; or at least what the public calls a happy ending; the return of the prodigal to wife and homestead, the departure of the Magdalen into the indifferent world. It is ghastly to think that, for the sake of Government supervision, a fine work should thus be spoilt; and that its vitality should be sapped to obey the Censor. For this is a fact, if "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith," after an existence of scarce six years, is in parts already moth-eaten and mouldy, it is merely the fault of the lamentable conclusion. The first two acts are still fine, but in the third act things gallop downwards at a vertiginous pace, and the last, which was already condemned in 1895, is now positively intolerable. I wonder that Mr. Pinero has not used his leisure to improve upon this, his greatest work, a play that, as far as literature is concerned, entirely overshadows "The second Mrs. Tanqueray." The final act of nearly every play of our foremost dramatist is his weakest point, and, as a period of rest is mostly very apt to lead to a successful revision of a work, it would have been fortunate if Mr. Pinero had listened to his advisers. Or is he, like Agnes Ebbsmith, no longer amenable to counsel, since he was induced to alter the first beautiful solution of "The Profligate," and to ruin it by a "happy ending"?

III.

Mrs. Patrick Campbell, riper in years and in experience, has resumed the part that was written for her. Involuntarily our thoughts drift back to the past as we renew our acquaintance with Agnes Ebbsmith, and for once there is no need to deplore the good old times. Mrs. Campbell has improved in method, in manner, above all in power. Her voice is still unpleasant, guttural, and rasping like the intonations of a Dutch provincial. And, although it is said by the Duke of St. Olpherts that he recognises her "raucous" organ, so that the tones of Mrs. Campbell may not be out of place in this particular part, I hold that her elocution wants chastening. She is also ill-advised to imitate, willy-nilly perhaps, the style of Duse—the masterly inactivity of limb and tongue. That is Duse's privilege and her power, but the cap does not fit every one, especially one whose whole being exhales passion—ungovernable, spontaneous. Mrs. Campbell should not restrain, for restraint does not befit her, nor does it suit the play, which was almost funereal in the slowness of everybody's delivery. Mrs. Campbell should let go her passion, her emotion, her temperament. And, even when she has done that, even then she will not reach the summit from which a character like Agnes Ebbsmith can be governed at will. This is no blame, it is merely a description of limitations. For the art of Mrs. Patrick Campbell, now that it is mellowed, less exquisite, less *précieuse*, less "souful" (another word for "empty") than it was, begins to attract, and, if she would but work for a time under an artistic stage-manager, such as Mr. Max Behrend or Mr. Worlitzsch of the Germans—masters both of their craft—she would do wonders with the means at her command. What a Marikke in "Johannisfeuer" of Sudermann she could give if she were properly stage-managed. But I digress, I am always pleading for ideals. All I want to say is that Mrs. Campbell's performance of "the Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith" is in many ways beautiful and a thing to be seen. There are others in the cast of

great merits. There is Courtenay Thorpe, somewhat ungainly, but a highly intellectual Cleeve; there is Miss Winifred Fraser, a most agreeable representative of our middle-class ideas; there is Gerald du Maurier, in a fine type of conventional native hum-and-haw asininity; there is, last but not least, George Arliss as the Duke of St. Olpherts. To me his was the finest performance of the play, better even than John Hare's, the creator of the part. I have closely followed Mr. Arliss's career, and always hoped for much. But this impersonation of the Duke is almost a revelation. He literally drained the character; he rendered it with all its finesse, its acerbity of speech, its cynicism of the evergreen yet gouty old beau. I read the play again after the performance, and, comparing the interpretation of every character with my imagination, I saw but one that realised my thoughts, it was the Duke of St. Olpherts, as represented by Mr. George Arliss. So here is the summing-up of a well-spent evening; two splendid achievements of actors and a play that, with all its faults, will graft itself firmly and for ever upon our mind. How often do we come away from our playhouses with such a plenitude?

COMEDY: GERMAN PLAYS—"DER DORNENWEG,"

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS, BY FELIX PHILIPPI.

March 10, 1901.

I.

The story is sad but true. I remember the case vividly, for the wretched hero of it was a schoolfellow of mine in Bremen. He became a "plunger" a few years after, in the days when racing was in its infancy in Germany. The bookmakers gave him much credit, for his was a great name. One day, in Hamburg, on the Turf, he lost twenty thousand marks, an irretrievable sum. They gave him breathing time, but soon the law was upon his heels. His father was his last hope. But a North-German father is a hard nut to crack; he hates the bang of sixpences. On the threshold of the private office the boy faltered, he was about to go back and bear the consequences, when, on the desk of the Procurist (attorney and manager), he saw a little pile of brown bank notes—notes of a thousand marks each. One swift movement and the deed was done,—the real thief would never be suspected! But, of course, the guiltless manager was held responsible, and, as his answers were vague, he was branded. You know the rest of such stories—painful examinations, prison, broken lives.

Yet the heart of the sinner was not so hardened that it could withstand the pressure of guilt; it gave way, and in his mother's bosom the boy hid his head and unburdened his soul. The mother—a mother first, a woman after—could not deliver up her son to justice and shame; in the

immensity of her love she became a fellow sinner, an accessory after the fact, as the law calls it. For she remained silent, and henceforth she had to walk the "thorny path" of irreparable remorse. . . .

You wish to know the end of my tale; here it is. The youth went to sea, and the life made a man of him; he is now a well-to-do merchant, a husband, and a father in a China port. The other man's sorrow was alleviated, his self-esteem was propped up with that universal patent medicine—money. But his youth and his illusions remained unredeemed. Such is life.

II.

Felix Philippi culls his story from life and the newspaper. His is a clever and fertile brain, and in the shrewdest manner he knows how to turn an item of news, a court-scandal, a financial "Krach," a Dreyfus case, into a drama, and not bad drama either. It always lacks, of course, the sincerity of conviction, it savours of the "feuilleton"; it is rough work, as if done by a lightning painter; yet from a theatrical point of view it is always effective. "Der Dornenweg," the gist of which I have been telling, was, I believe, one of Philippi's firstlings, and it still remains one of his best. It is a play with great faults, for two of the acts merely narrate what has happened, whereas good drama should show us life in action. Nor can it be said that the author has avoided melodrama, something after the varnished style of "Captain Swift," but so dexterously is the story welded together that even they who scoff at melodrama are carried away. And the ladies—oh! the ladies—they weep and sniff as if influenza reigned supreme in the theatre. These little indications suffice to show how interesting "Der Dornenweg" is as a play, how vigorously Philippi has harped upon the string that vibrates in all of us, the veneration of our mothers in all their love and sorrow. And thus it is a play to be seen, a clean play for our daughters and sisters, a play to be transplanted to England, and to be acted by a Mrs. Theodore Wright and a man like Wyndham.

As for our little German band (were but all German bands like this!), they maintained the high standard of their excellence, Worlitzsch first and foremost. Nothing could be better than this cool-blooded, matter-of-fact patrician of Bremen, under whose buttoned-up frock-coat there beats a rugged, but a good, heart. Worlitzsch was all Bremen to the life, the proud Hansa Republic personified in one grey-bearded, sailor-like gentleman. Worlitzsch is a master of his art. And once more his wife Dora—I would fain say our Matadora—has shown the immense versatility of her gifts. The day before yesterday she danced a bolero in short petticoats; yesterday she played the famous Wolffen in “Der Biberpelz;” to-day she, the comely, buxom woman, impersonates an old lady, a dowager of the middle-class. It is the veriest *tour de force*, a thing that makes one giddy to think of, reviewing the tremendous variety of her repertoire. But she has made the effort, and all who are not prejudiced by the pretty singing and dancing Dora must own up that she has done well. Behrend, too, had an excellent evening; he was the broken-hearted manager, the victim of the theft, and he drew tears from countless fair eyes, for he was genuine, and his cries of distress came from the heart. Yet Behrend, rich in passion as he is, must not altogether let the reins run loose. He sometimes forces his voice and shouts his fellow actors down; as a splendid stage-manager, he knows that this may blur the picture. Richard Richter, one of our young and hopeful artists, once more scored a notable success. His part was short, and our feelings went against it. Still, he conquered us when, in his seaman’s attire—a picture of strength—he broke down under the load of his guilt. His “peccavi” was heart-rending, it was truly felt by the actor, and made the audience feel with him. Mr. Julius Nollet, dignified and refined as the advocate, Miss Gademan, Miss Timmling, all helped to round off this excellent performance, one that begins the last month of our present season. How we shall miss these premières of every week at the Comedy!

GEORGE ALEXANDER'S MUNIFICENCE.

March 17, 1901.

I.

"Excuse my humour," as the carrotty policemen says in "Dandy Dick," but I want to know whether Mr. Alexander means business or mere sport agreeably flavoured with seasonable réclame. Not that I doubt Mr. Alexander's word or munificence, by no means, for of all the younger actor-managers he is the one who talks and does. He is a business man, and no mistake. But there lurks a suspicion in that wicked mind of mine that the Playgoers' Club's guest of the evening was taking advantage of our postprandial conviviality to poke fun at us members who are always described as "ardent, enthusiastic, and generous students of the play." For what does Mr. Alexander propose? He suggests a committee, and Mr. Findon propounds Zangwill, Max Beerbohm, and myself to join him in the perusal of all the plays sent in—hard labour is amusement compared with it!—and to refer the happy choice to Mr. Alexander as a kind of umpire. If he does not exercise his right of veto, then brother Tree will select the cast, stage manage the play, and the "great unacted" will have a right regal trial-trip. It sounds charming—on paper. But is it practicable?

In the first place as to the committee. Does Mr. Alexander entirely forget the history of the woeful and not even very spotless career of the Society of British Dramatic Art? It was founded with a flourish of umpets such as never heralded in any theatrical enter-

prise except an actor-manager's. Openly it pretended to foster the interests of National British Art, covertly it was not only a pedestal for several habitual theatrical agitators (none of them earnest workers, most of them self-advertising opportunists), but also to compete with and to defeat the then fairly flourishing Independent Theatre. Several actor-managers, including Messrs. Alexander and Tree, were patrons and presidents; a much-read and enthusiastic theatrical newspaper, the *Stage*, backed the society through thick and thin; and everywhere there was a tam-tam and a hallelujah as if at last the *perpetuum mobile* of the English stage had been discovered. But the mountain did not even breed a mouse. In spite of protection, support, sympathy, and cash, the thing from the beginning proved a failure. The committee soon quarrelled, secessions took place, aspersions of financial uncleanness were cast abroad, a few performances were given, too slovenly and unimportant to court notice, let alone criticism, and then, after a miserable consumptive existence of a year or so, the thing collapsed into disgraceful oblivion. That is the synopsis of the history of the Society of British Dramatic Art. Now, with this record facing us, we, the Playgoers, are again invited to do, on a smaller scale, what the society intended to do wholesale. Again a committee is to read plays, again the actor-manager is to rule supreme and to do everything to further the scheme, and both Mr. Tree and Mr. Alexander promise "mounts and marvels." I repeat, it sounds wonderfully well, but I cannot believe in earnest intentions; the very idea of a committee bears the death-mark, and Mr. Findon's suggestion that he, Zangwill, Max Beer-bohm, and I should be the readers rules the proposal out of court. I will not expatiate on the point whether it is fair to saddle four hard working men, none of whom can afford the time to roam through reams of rubbish (which the play of the "great unacted" mostly is), in order to hit upon a presentable drama that would repay the trouble and Mr. Alexander's generosity. Personally, I feel sure that the four of us, if we said yes to Mr. Findon's pro-

posal, would soon give it up from sheer exhaustion, or else become faithless to our bond. But that is a detail. Of graver moment is the question how one could expect Zangwill, Max Beerbohm, and the present writer to harmonise with Mr. Findon, whom I esteem as a friend in private life and, in public, as an honest critic. Has anyone heard Mr. Findon's recent lecture on the "Trail of the Ibsen Serpent?" I have not, for I knew what he would say, and I feared my pugnacity; but I have read the report, and on the face of it I declare that his ideas and ours, progressists and admirers of Ibsen all three of us, drift so widely apart that no agreement between us can possibly be hoped for.

II.

And now, after this outspokenness, let me prove that I am a builder and not a mere breaker. Allow me to make an honest bid for the right direction, in order that Mr. Alexander's splendid gift may not evaporate like a bubble. Abroad, where the drama is frequently stimulated by competitions (the Belgian Government even allows every native play a State bounty on each performance), some happy results have been obtained by the very idea developed by Mr. Alexander. Only: no committee! no co-operation of two or more managers! No hydra, but one head. Only a man with a strong will, a strong purpose, and unfaltering earnestness can govern the revival of a neglected industry. If Mr. Alexander means what he says, and I hope he does, let him select the play, caste, and produce it of his own accord. It is hard work without a doubt, but it is useful work. And, of course, nobody expects Mr. Alexander to wade through the ocean of manuscripts when the flood-gates are open. Oh, no! we want him to preserve his energies for his theatre and his arduous nightly work. He should appoint a reader, and pay him for the sacrifice of his time. That reader should be a man of great literary acumen, of

Catholic taste, of no bias whatever; a man like W. L. Courtney, like G. B. S., like Harry Esmond, like Hermann Vezin, to name a few, if they can spare an entire month or so of their valuable time. The name of the reader should not be made known until the selection is made in unison with Mr. Alexander, who would only have to peruse the very few manuscripts set aside by his A.D.C. for "further consideration." Nor should manuscripts be sent in with the name of the author, lest afterwards the charge of nepotism were preferred and enmity were engendered against Mr. Alexander. The way they do it abroad is this: Every manuscript bears a motto, and inside the cover there must be attached a closed envelope containing the name and address of the sender, to be verified when the play is demanded back. When the selection is made, the winner would be proclaimed, the others remain incognito. In this manner the strictest fairness can be observed, and both Mr. Alexander and his reader can honestly declare that their choice was entirely guided by their conscience and their personal taste. Whether the play be a success or the reverse, is of no consequence, and would nowise affect the reputation of the readers. No man can with absolute certainty predict the fate of a play, all he can do is to judge with his head and with his heart, and, if he is a man of taste, there is every chance of a good or, at least, an estimable selection.

This is all so far. The proof of the pudding will be in the eating. But if Mr. Alexander will work on these lines he will render a signal service to our drama and aspirant dramatists. Under all circumstances he will then have a claim on the gratitude of all students of the stage. For, if the play succeeds, it will be a triumph for the author and a feather in the cap of actor-managerdom; and, if it fails, it will do something to quieten the common complaint that good plays go a-begging for want of a hearing.

GERMAN PLAYS.

"ROSENMONTAG,"

A PLAY IN FIVE ACTS, BY OTTO ERICH HARTLEBEN.

March 24, 1901.

In Germany this tragedy is the play of the day. The gifted author, perhaps overwhelmed at his success, lost his balance, and for a time his mind is under a cloud. Yet his work lives, and from day to day its spirit penetrates deeper into the minds of the people.

To understand fully what the play means—how intimately it is associated with the German national character—one must have lived in the Fatherland, in one of those garrison towns where the lieutenant is a god, and the military spirit pervades the whole atmosphere. One must have lived, I say, among these proud men, with whom honour is dearer than life, and to whom life without honour—honour as a German officer understands it—is not worth living. To us in England there appears to be something eccentric in the very exalted ideas these officers have of their own dignity and in the respect they enforce from others. We do not consider that death, self-inflicted or by the adversary's sword in duel, is the healer of our wounded feelings. For to provoke a duel is to threaten murder, and unless suicide is covered by the verdict of insanity of a benevolent jury, we hold it to be a sin against ourselves and God—*felo de se*.

Now, in "Rosenmontag," which begins as brightly

as the lightest of comedies, amidst the brilliant array of uniforms in the officers' mess-rooms, the cloud descends when we hear that Hans, who by the intrigues of two comrades had been cut adrift from the poor girl he loved, in order to find money and a haven in respectable matrimony, has broken his word of honour. The rupture between him and the woman who was all to him had brought him to a bed of sickness. When he recovered and drifted back into the routine of the barracks, now no longer saddled with a maitresse, but a respectable man, definitely engaged to be married ere long into an even more respectable family, he gave his word of honour to his colonel that he would never meet his former idol again, for his comrades had told him that she was unworthy of his love, that she had betrayed him.

The action takes place in a small garrison town, where there is no need for the long arm of coincidence to bring people together, and so it happens that soon after his return to the regiment Hans meets his Gertrude, now in mourning and miserable to behold, who implores him for a hearing. Was it his sense of justice that made him swerve? Was it love? At any rate, he asked her to come to his rooms in the barracks, and to say what she had to say. She comes, and proves her innocence. Yet, at the moment when the confession has brought those two hearts once more near to one another, the comrade—the very officer who had boasted of Gertrude's seduction—enters the room, and ere long, in a hot discussion between the two men, the enemy utters such opprobrious words that the woman hidden in the next room bursts out and charges him with being worse than a murderer. From that moment the fate of these two human beings is sealed. Hans has broken his trust. His foe threatens to denounce him—the denunciation means flight, dishonour, or death. For a German officer who has broken his word is held unworthy to retain his sword. Hans is not a strong character. Gertrude is—she will

follow him to the end of the world—she will follow him to death. If Hans had been of different fibre, he would have asked to be called before a court of honour, he would have exposed the diabolical machinations of his brother officers, two of whom were cousins, to destroy his happiness for the sake of conventional felicity. There is no saying what such a court would have decided, but as integrity is one of the greatest characteristics of German officers, as of our own, he would, at any rate, have had fair play. The trouble in the matter was that Hans had not only broken faith with his colonel, but also insulted his senior officer—that drove him to despair and to death. Coolly he makes his preparations. He writes to the family of his bride—he writes to his grandmother, and with that sentimentality which is so typically German, he sits down and writes some verses—verses describing how, on the Monday before Ash Wednesday, two lovers were found lying cold and lifeless in one another's arms. When Gertrude's eye falls on this paper she understands, and hand in hand in the whirl of the masquerade of the moribund carnival, with gay dominoes covering the sadness of their faces, they walk into death in the very mess-room where, a few days before Hans was hailed as a welcome prodigal!

Such is the skeleton of a play founded on actual life as Hartleben witnessed it. I have but struck a few key-notes of the tragedy. I have but traced the outline of the multi-coloured, vivid, fascinating surroundings in which this tragedy is engendered. For nothing but the performance itself can do justice to the picture, in which every character—and there are seventeen men and one woman—stands out as clearly cut as a cameo. Every line pulsating with life, every word sober, crisp, to the point, reveals an author whose mind grasps the entire phase of life in the compact entity of a single thought.

The faults of the play, and there are some, are purely ethical, for we have seen that Hans is of weak

clay, and that there was no absolute warrant for the tragic ending. There are, perhaps, also faults of construction, for undoubtedly before we get to the main action we have to go through a long preface, and such introduction, purely military, showing us the inner life of German soldiery, is not perhaps quite to the taste of a foreign audience. To me, I must confess, this latter fault, this slow preparation which Sardou practised in his best works, is a virtue. That I do not stand alone in this appreciation was proved by the audience of the first night of "Rosenmontag" in England, as it is proved every day in well-nigh every town of Germany. Our audience soon warmed to the thing—the uniforms, the dialogue, the whole martial atmosphere, kindled their imagination and also the patriotism of many, and when the tragedy appeared, it fell upon a soil fertile with emotions.

II.

There is no disguising the fact that this performance was the *va banque* of the German theatre. It was the crucial evening of the season. Failure meant its death, and besides, in our inner circle there arose fear, for on the eve of production illness almost rendered the performance impossible. Yet orders were given to march on, and we obtained help from an excellent actor from Germany, Otto Reimann, who, at two days' notice, sailed to these shores, and was perfect in the part. All this trouble met with its reward. We had a performance so harmonious in its unity, so beautiful in detail, that men who had seen the play at the municipal theatres in Berlin and Frankfort came to us and said that we need not blush. And more, our own forces did not suffice to man the play; we had to invoke the help of *dilettante* young gentlemen living in London, reserve officers in the German army, who came to our rescue, and when they stood upon the stage there was no difference between them and the players by profession. For that we have to thank our excellent stage manager, Max Behrend, who has surpassed himself.

For the rest, the immense load of the tragedy rests upon the shoulders of Hans Andresen and Clara Sella. To say that both were excellent is to be commonplace; their performance was life itself, fraught with heart-rending emotions that went straight across to the spectators. Men and women wept, and when Andresen, the picture of dignity and intense force, spoke, and when Miss Sella, sober, tender, quiet, yet immensely effective, as only a Duse or a Sorma can be, gave him reply, the house was breathless.

I do not exaggerate; I am accustomed to theatrical demonstrations, and to the palpitations of moving plays and intense acting, but seldom have I seen such ovations as were given to our Andresen and our Clara Sella—two artists whom all London ought to see. For if one cannot understand the language of their mouth, the language of their hearts must say something to everyone.

"DIE EHRE,"

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS, BY L. H. SUDERMANN.

March 31, 1901.

I.

The case of "Die Ehre" may be compared with that of "Cyrano de Bergerac." Four years ago "Cyrano" stirred the Parisian world, and soon after the whole of Europe, because it was the first powerful demonstration of a reaction against the transgressions of the realistic school.

In 1889 "Die Ehre" was the first palpable manifestation that in Germany, under the influence of Ibsen, the romantic school had been done to death, and that the time had come for a new era. The great success of "Die Ehre" is not merely to be ascribed to its advent at an opportune moment; there is another reason, and one which should be remembered by every Pioneer. For what does Sudermann do? He does not wildly break the images of the old school and supplant them by violent force with absolutely new doctrines. No! But, clever man that he is—trained in journalism—he effects a compromise, and gives us a play that stands with one leg in the era of Sardou and his followers, while with the other it makes a bold stride towards Ibsen, Zola, and the other radical path finders of France and Scandinavia.

This dualism does not merely exist in the ethical conception of the play; it is clearly apparent in its dramatic construction. Two acts are laid in the opulent, commonplace, conventional home of the rich merchant, in

front of a huge house in Berlin; the other two acts are located in the Hinterland as it were, in the back-yard of that same house, let out to a proletarian family. All that happens in the front house is French drawing-room comedy, adroitly constructed, but not going beneath the surface. We have here the habitual reasoner, Count Trast, who is, so to speak, the salvationist of everything and everybody, who holds the scales and dispenses justice, and who indulges in a philosophy so skin-deep that one would fain call it sophistry, if the amusing *tourneur* of the language did not save his effusions. Count Trast strikes the keynote of the play, and this is how he crystallises its central idea, in a scene between himself and three young men about town. I have faithfully translated this little fragment from the German play, which determined its success, because it eloquently shows how Sudermann compromised with the new school and the old in the front house episodes:

TRAST: What we commonly call honour is nothing else but the shadow behind us when the sun of public esteem shines on us. But the worst of it is that we possess as many different kinds of honour as social circles and functions. How is one to make head or tail of it?

LOTHAR (sharply): You are wrong, Count. There is only one kind of honour, as there is only one sun and one God. If one does not feel that, one is no gentleman.

TRAST: Well, allow me to tell you a very short tale. On a journey through Central Asia I came to the house of some Prince of Tibet. I was dusty and tired. He received me sitting on his throne, with a young, lovely woman by his side. "Rest, stranger," he said; "my wife will prepare you a bath, after which we men will sit down to a meal." And he left me to the tender cares of the young woman. Gentlemen, if ever in my life I had a chance of testing my self-control, it was then. When I re-entered the hall, what do you think I found? The men in arms, shouting with unsheathed swords. "You must die!" my host calls out; "you have mortally insulted the honour of my house, for you have despised the most precious gift it can offer." You see, gentlemen, I am still alive, for I was finally pardoned, for the sake of the poor notions which we European barbarians have of honour. If ever you see one of our modern divorce dramatists, give him my regards, and tell him I make him a present of this situation. . . . Gentle-

men, I do not wish to be considered frivolous. It is quite moral to examine the riddles of morality. You see, besides, this so-called honour may only be possessed by a few, a handful of demi-gods, for it is a luxury which loses its value in proportion to the mob which may try to acquire it.

KURT : That, Count, is paradoxical. Every man is permitted to be a man of honour.

TRAST : On the contrary. For in that case the first poor devil from the back-yard could come and claim the honour of a gentleman for himself.

LOTHAR : If he acts accordingly, he is a gentleman.

TRAST : Well—possibly. May I trouble you with a second, a still shorter tale? But I fear I am boring you.

LOTHAR and HUGO (laughing) : Oh, no !

TRAST : The scene is somewhere in South America, where the Spaniards form the aristocracy ; the mob is a mixture of negroes, Red Indians, and all sorts of white scum. One of this unclean race—his name was, I think, Pepe—happened to be transplanted to Spain, and there had occasion to get a slight streak of the brush of Castilian honour. When, after several years, he returns, he finds his just grown-up sister too familiarly acquainted with a young aristocrat. Gentlemen, keep calm. According to the birthright of the girl, this was her destiny. Yet the young rascal has the audacity to claim satisfaction from the lover, just as if he had not been lowly born, but in the aristocracy.

KURT (aside) : He means me.

TRAST : You see, gentlemen, that man was mad, and he was accordingly treated as a madman. But now the true nature of the rascal reveals itself. He lies in ambush and shoots down the young nobleman. He is condemned, and even on the gallows the idiot—Pepe, I think, was his name—affirms that he dies for his honour. Gentlemen, isn't that simply ludicrous ?

On the other hand, in the Hinterland, there reigns quite a different atmosphere. Here are no manufactured characters, no bookish subjects, no marionettes—un-German and ineffectual—but living people in whose veins streams real blood, although it is the real blood of the Berlin lowly suburb. These people in their sordidness, in their greed, in their subservience to capital and position ; these people in whom all conception of honour in the accepted sense of the word has been demoralised ; this father who shuts his eyes to the bad ways of his daughters, the one on the high road to an evil life, the other already

so far swamped that she shelters her sister's shame; this son-in-law, the very type of man against whom the Emperor William enforced the famous "Lex Heinze"—all these people are revoltingly human in the abjectness of their characters. They would have been altogether objectionable if Sudermann's wit and the grace of his pen had not saved them by that dash of sentiment and that superiority of expression of which he has shown himself a past master ever since his first novel, "*Frau Sorge*," promised him fame. For however tainted and infected the whole family of Heinke is, there are two redeeming elements. First, the mother, who, drifting as she is into the quicksands of vice, has not been forsaken by the maternal spirit and that love of her offspring which covers such a multitude of sins. Then the son, Robert, the victim of the play, and of his family's disgrace, until, in the last act, his rectitude is rewarded by the daughter of the front house, who leaves home and parents to follow the man she loves.

To draw a comparison which is, perhaps, not altogether out of place, I would say then that Sudermann has done in "*Die Ehre*" that which our own Tom Robertson did twenty-five years before him in "*Caste*," with this difference, that Robertson, drawing the hearts and coronets together is altogether romantic, expunging every thought of real sordidness, while Sudermann, of a more modern age, does not shrink, in order to prove the thesis of the different conceptions of honour, from diving into the lower depths of contemporary life.

II.

The brilliant performance, which my young colleague will review in another column, could not save the play from the damaging criticism that it has outlived its life. I have frequently pointed out how quickly dramas age, and how the mark of time impresses itself forcibly on works which a few years ago were considered not only deeply fascinating, but eminently progressive, for such

was the case in 1889, when "Die Ehre" was hailed in Berlin as the forerunner of a new era. Since that time much water has run down the River Spree, and fresh tides have brought new ideas. Sudermann, himself, has broken with that dualism which, in my estimation, is the main cause of "Die Ehre's" premature senility. He has given us besides "Magda"—which stands outside the general series, for its value as a work of art is not generally accepted—"The Happy Nook," "Morituri," "The Battle of the Butterflies," "Johannes," "St. John's Fire," and other plays, which now cast "Die Ehre" into the shade. The man—he is over forty—has ripened, and with him his method; his zenith is yet to come, for every new work reveals the increase of his courage and the greater independence of his ideas. Nor is it fair to pronounce, years after the birth of a work of art, a damaging verdict, without taking into consideration all the circumstances of its inception.

In my remarks above, I have tried to prove the merits of the case, and if I repeat that "Die Ehre" is now more or less out of date, I cannot refrain from reminding every playgoer who renews his acquaintance with this remarkable work, that that which has now paled, only a decade ago out-shone all its contemporaries.

A PLAY OF ATMOSPHERE.

April 7, 1901.

I.

Chronologically "Lonely Lives" is the third play of the great German author Gerhart Hauptmann, and compared with its predecessors, "Before Sunrise" and "The Coming of the Peace," it marks an advance so great that one would almost doubt that the three pieces were from the same pen.

Hauptmann was, in those early days, like nearly every other young author, deeply under the influence of Ibsen, who, after having enjoyed but modest fame in Germany, suddenly radiated like a meteor. But if all the others who followed in Ibsen's wake, and in his footsteps, were merely imitators, not so Hauptmann. He was a disciple, between whom and the master mind there was a great affinity. He saw the whole world afloat in that hazy atmosphere which Ibsen for the first time had vitalised on the stage. He had the master's command of language, his depth of thought. And thus, when "Lonely Lives" appeared upon the stage, tediously long, immensely sad, deeply tragic, yet not generally dramatic—argumentative, philosophical and almost barren of action—it created what I would call by a new term a *succès de surprise*. The younger generation of course raved over it; the older, flinging their arms Heavenwards, exclaimed, "Whither are we going?" However, the public soon recognised that "Lonely Lives" was something better than a mere experiment in Ibsen—that it was the first great manifestation of a new man who would soon have to be reckoned with in

Germany's literary world. "Lonely Lives" was the cornerstone of Hauptmann's career—it spread his fame far beyond his fatherland; and if in the course of time, in other works, the author has risen to greater achievements—notably in the construction of his plays and in their conciseness of form—it can safely be asserted that the real Hauptmann, with all his gigantic qualities and all his faults is crystallised in that one gloomy tragedy, which was all the more remarkable since it was the forerunner of Ibsen's more famous "Master Builder."

II.

Yes, if Ibsen had not created Hilda Wagnel, the student Anna Mahr would have been as famous as the girl who bewitched the Master Builder and initiated his tragic end. Practically, in the two plays the central situation is the same, although the mainsprings are different. In "The Master Builder" the man perishes by his own hand, fearful of the new generation that knocks at the door; in "Lonely Lives" he seeks the cool waters of the lake because, with the departure of Anna, inspiration, love, aye, life itself, had fled from him! They are all lonely lives—the lonely folk in Hauptmann's heart-rending play. Lonely are the elderly couple, the parents of John, because they—old-fashioned folk—had trained a child in the spirit of the Gospel, only to see him drifting with the aid of the philosophy of the modern school into incredulity and blasphemy. The very name of God was sufficient to unstring John's nerves, and to arouse his anger. A lonely life is that of the sweet young mother. Blessed after four years' wedlock with the first offspring of an ill-matched love, she is the incarnation of all that is tender, refined, and warm-hearted in woman's nature. She, although it has scarcely been recognised here, is one of those creations that should ever remain alive in the dramatic Pantheon. A lonely life is that of Anna, early cast adrift upon the world; steeped, at the notoriously progressive University of Zurich, in all the doctrines of an

emancipating school, she, too, is a fine type of woman, only she was before her time. Anna was a specimen, in embryo, of that new generation which seeks fresh ideals outside the domestic hearth and the nursery. Of love there was an infinite fund in her composition, but with her it was not passion that ruled the mind—it was mind that ruled passion. Thus she, not the little wife, is the match for John—the dreamer, the thinker, the neuropath—she is the complementary element of his existence; most lonely soul of all! vacillating between philosophy and the iron rod of duty. That simple little woman, unattractive from the ordinary man's point of view, casts an unconquerable spell upon the soul of that lonesome man. For her he is ready to break with all, with home and parents, with wife and child; when she is present he lives, brilliantly, eloquently, fertile in thought, hopeful in plans; when she goes, it is as if the sun had paled and as if the sap of life had been crushed out of him. And thus, when in the conflict between her affection and her duty, honour finally triumphs and she determines to play temptress no longer, but to go away in order to save her friend's family from destruction, she is, yet, involuntarily, an accessory to the break up of that home, for as soon as Anna has gone, John, dejected to the verge of insanity, settles a rapid account with the world and his family. On the table of the obscurely-lighted room he pens a hasty scrawl, then slowly unfastens his watch-chain and lays it with his watch upon the table as his only legacy to bequeath, and goes out, the splashes of the water reported by a neighbouring friend marking the fatal termination of a wasted existence.

The narrative and elements of this story bear their criticism on the face of it. We will leave the gloom alone, for gloom is no artistic reproach. What we have to find fault with, apart from the very lengthy process of evolution, is the weakness of the principal character and the one-sidedness of nearly every personage of the play. One may call them characters without compromise—uncompromising Christians, uncompromising heretics,

uncompromising apostles of the commonplace. And yet, stripped of all its tragic force, or, as some would call it, exaggeration, how much there is in "Lonely Lives" that is human, that is true, that is an every-day story! If you do not believe it at the first glance, let but your mind pass slowly over all the family circles of your surroundings, and ask yourself, "How often does it not happen that the sudden appearance of an 'Anna Mahr' snaps the brittle links of an ill-forged chain?"

III.

A play like this wants acting of the finest quality, as it were under a gauze, by which I mean to say that in movement, in gesture, and in tone, every character must maintain the same diapason; one discord, one voice too highly raised, one scene of rosier hue rendered in too lively a style, must needs destroy the entire picture. It is the task of Atlas for a stage manager to produce that harmony and I regret to say that in the production by the Stage Society the atmosphere was entirely wanting, nor do I see for the present moment, in all the width and breadth of our land, one single stage manager who could cope with the great difficulties offered by the modern Scandinavian, German, and French schools, unless he should live awhile in the three countries whence the new movement has progressed.

It is not my intention to find fault with the individual actors or to name them, for when men and women work honestly and disinterestedly in the cause of art, it does not become us to castigate them for their shortcomings.

That the stage management bore traces of no definite plan of campaign and of hasty preparation is no one's fault, for the time allowed for study was altogether inadequate; but what I do protest against is that from first to last, both with actors and the stage direction, there seemed to prevail the opinion that this tragedy was of common clay, and had to be acted in the robust style of the Adelphi or Drury Lane, instead of in the refined, delicate,

insinuating manner of the philosophic drama. Thus with John, the hero of the play—the bundle of nerves—it was never once realised that in a finely-woven mind nervousness is not always translated by explosiveness. John must not be a bully and a tyrant; he need not rush round the rooms, and fling his arms about and shout at the top of his voice like any clown, but should be soft in manner, incisive in style, and the manifestations of his mental exaltation should be gently hinted at by a twist of the hand, a shiver through the body, or a quiver of the countenance. And as for the mother, the true, sweet, old-fashioned mother, ever ready with the good old times and the Bible, she should not storm at that misguided boy of hers; her voice should be tender with the maternal accent, and her gentle remonstrances should fall soothingly upon the recalcitrant ears of her son. For me, the ideal woman for this part is Mrs. Theodore Wright, for to this very day do we hear the echo of her pathetic accents in Ibsen's "Ghosts."

In this concert of disharmony, there was but one player who struck the true note, and it is right that I should name her—Miss Dorothy Hammond as the young mother. If all had acted like her, if all had remembered that discretion in diction is not only the better part of valour but the main canon of artistic success, no one can say what the fate of "Lonely Lives" would have been. As it was, gloom gathered thick and fast over the audience, until, as they filed out, many said, as they always say when the new school has spoken, "How gruesome!" And some, who saw the kernel through a defective shell, exclaimed, "How deeply interesting!"

“THE WILDERNESS,”

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS BY H. V. ESMOND.

April 14, 1901.

I.

Do you know what personal charm is? It is the effect produced by a man or a woman who enters a room, makes a few graceful movements, says a few words very much to the point in an agreeable voice, and suddenly creates an atmosphere which wins everybody. It is a precious gift, and Mr. Esmond as a playwright possesses it.

As soon as the curtain has risen, and the action delicately ushered in settles down to comfortable development, the audience experiences a certain—I don't know what—which is irresistible, and goes a long way towards making a successful evening. How it is that Mr. Esmond's plays have the peculiar power of driving the scent of the hay, the sweetness of nature, and the warm breath of love across the footlights, I cannot explain; but there it is, and, although the play may be a thing of gossamer, it is so refined and so tender that one can only compare it to one of those treasured bits of Venetian glass, fragile, dainty, and beautiful, that adorn our chimney-pieces. Nor can I withhold the commendation that in a minor key Mr. Esmond displays great boldness. His first ambition when building his work is not a complicated story nor a construction obedient to the old rules of dramatic convention. In fact, his stories can be told in a few words, and in this simplicity lies a particular merit. His strong point is the

sculpture of characters both large and small, and the style of dialogue which in felicity stands a good deal above the average English play. Thus equipped, and always followed by his faithful satellite—charm—Mr. Esmond has become one of the young hopes of the modern British drama. We have all applauded his “Summer’s Day;” some of us, fond of progressive methods, have rapturously praised the good work in “Grierson’s Way,” and now we are all united in congratulating Mr. Alexander upon the return of good Fortune to St. James’s Theatre.

II.

To a certain extent “The Wilderness” is a problem play in the most amiable sense of the word. The pivot is the marriage of a wealthy man about town with a woman whom he ardently loved, and who had only taken him for the splendour of his fortune. Once married, finding that her husband is not only the right man, but that she loves him, repentance besets her on account of the false pretences which formed the basis of their union, for in truth before her marriage her heart had belonged to another man, impecunious like herself, but neither ambitious nor plucky enough to enter the little boat in the hope of prosperity. Later on, when that man has fought in Africa and returned to London, she discovers that, in spite of his martial valour, his heart is not sound; the man is a cad, and would fain destroy the already somewhat endangered domestic hearth of his friend and former sweetheart. It is this dastardly behaviour which opens the wife’s eyes. She feels she must confess to her husband, and in a scene, long, but conducted with mastery, she pours out her heart and, as it were, places the golden link at his feet. For one moment her fate trembles in the balance—one moment we spectators feel as if this comedy were turning into a tragedy; but such was not the author’s intention. As he had dragged the wealthy society man from the tea and talk and humbug, the superficiality of town life, to God’s free and beautiful nature, where, amidst

trees and the glory of a spotless firmament, his heart went out to the woman of his choice, so Mr. Esmond, well nigh at the close of his play, delivers the young couple from the wilderness of domestic infelicity. When the husband is on the point of yielding to his wife's request for release, a little incident needless to mention here, convinces him that the woman who took him for his gold has learned to love him for himself, that she is the woman who in sunshine or in storm and stress would be his helpmate and his haven. Upon that he opens his arms, and as she falls into them we know that the wilderness has changed as by magic into a beautiful garden.

I know full well that ethically all this is wrong. Good Heavens! In this world of ours is not money the ruling mainspring of marriage? Is it not a fact that of ten couples who swear before the altar, at least five are moved by a feeling which in an adoring sense is called love, but in reality is the esteem engendered by worldly possessions? And of those five couples, how many, I ask you—if the marriage happened to turn out well—would have the candour to admit that not the union of hearts but of shekels was the original bond which linked them? Men may do this thing exceptionally, for somehow among men it is becoming the fashion to court the money with the girl; but in a woman it seems somewhat inconceivable that she should risk her entire future by expelling, through confession of former selfishness, her husband from his seventh heaven. Somehow the notion would strike most of us perhaps as somewhat indelicate, certainly as incongruous; it is one of those cases to which Ibsen's famous words are applicable: "People don't do these things." And that is why, personally, however much I liked the agreeable tea-shop scene with its vivid colour in the first act, and the exquisite wood scene which followed, I must admit that I became recalcitrant when, in the third act, drama threatened to smother comedy. However, Mr. Esmond's dexterity, and the fervid language in which he closed the explanation between man and wife, conquered me, as it seemed to hold everybody else spell-bound. Thus, when the curtain dropped on an unforgettable

picture of two hearts beating in unison, the audience went out to the author and cheered to the echo.

III.

If there be one good defender of a man's work it is the woman who shares his life, and the first night at St. James's Theatre formed no exception to the rule. The great part of the play fell to Miss Eva Moore, who in daily life is known as Mrs. H. V. Esmond. She played it with all the tenderness, with all the abandon, not only of a consummate actress, but of a woman who wants to succeed with heart and soul. There was a time when the art of Miss Eva Moore was pretty yet almost finicking. That time has passed; with greater experience, with greater knowledge of life itself, the talent of the actress has ripened. She feels the word she says, she loses her personality in the part, and thus every emotion bears the stamp of genuine sincerity. A little more force yet, one tone of greater depth in the voice, and Miss Eva Moore will rise to greatness. As it is she displays the gift which her husband possesses in another direction, and in her charm there lurks a smile and a sob.

Mr. Alexander, too, warmed to the somewhat difficult task of metamorphosing the spoilt child of fortune into the deeply loving man, and well nigh for the first time did his voice betray accents of great power. If he seemed natural in his exultant gaiety when Cupid's arrow hit the mark, he was no less true to nature when the cloud threatened to descend upon his happiness. His outburst after the wife's confession came straight from the inner man, and if it has often been courtesy to say that he shared the honours of the evening, this time it is a compliment unadulterated by flattery.

On these two artistes rested the entire play. Others, like Mr. Graham Browne and Miss Julie Opp, had incidental parts of some importance, to which they did justice. Little children came upon the stage, and with their youthful prattle so archly and so freshly given, as if

there were no playhouse and no audience, made that audience happy. But the play belonged to Miss Eva Moore and Mr. Alexander, and with them the author formed a triumvirate which broke the spell of undeserved ill-luck that had been hovering over the famous playhouse in St. James's.

AT THE LYCEUM THEATRE: "CORIOLANUS."

April 21, 1901.

I.

There is, I think, no need to remind our readers that Sir Henry Irving has found in the columns of this paper the warmest support and the great admiration to which he is entitled for the yeoman service he has rendered to the drama and to the profession of the actor. In fact, as far as I am personally concerned, I shall defend his position as the premier of our stage-land so long as he chooses to adorn the calling which, socially and artistically, he has raised in the eyes of the world. Still, this affectionate regard for a great man should not blind us when technical mistakes are made, and—I say it unreservedly and with regret—I must look upon the selection of "Coriolanus" as the overture to Sir Henry's new season as a mistake in every sense of the word, only the more remarkable since not many weeks ago, when preparations for this stupendous production were but barely commenced, Mr. Benson gave a performance of this tragedy, which proved conclusively that it does not contain the material which warrants either scenic success or vitality. Nor was this the fault of Mr. Benson's well-meaning enterprise. It simply confirmed the opinion long since held in all Continental countries where Shakespeare is revered and cultivated, that "Coriolanus" is a play dry and unprofitable—a play undramatic, a tragedy which misses fire because it is little more than a transcription of Plutarch's life of the famous Roman Consul.

Side by side with one's memory of Coriolanus' great harangue there lingers a recollection of the powerful scene in which Volumnia endeavours to knead the iron-moulded mind of her son. It is a gigantic scene, which requires almost "uebermensch" acting, and even then it does not go straight to the heart; it does not thrill, to use the Ibsen word, and this remark is applicable to the whole play. Here is strength of character that provokes no enthusiasm in the spectator. Here is the motherly influence unhaloed by the divine sentiment of tender maternity. Here is heroism that does not fill us with enthusiasm for the hero. All we feel is a sort of frigid respect for a man who might have done great deeds, and ended gloriously, had there been more heart beating beneath his belt. I have witnessed performances where this coldness, sometimes degenerating into dulness, has not so much affected me as a spectator, partly because the fervour of the acting disguised the glacial temperature of the dialogue, partly because the text was treated with greater consideration. What we have seen at the Lyceum is a sequence of snapshots of "Coriolanus" feebly connected with one another by a not very lucid story; so full of gaps that it would hardly be possible to comprehend the plot if one had not previously read and digested the tragedy.

To condense all this into one terse judgment, at the Lyceum the play has been made subservient to pageantry and pictorial display, and for this mistake, however gilded it may have been by beautiful views of Ancient Rome, and by the meeting of the Senate at the Capitol, unforgettable in its dignity and its harmony of colour, the play was doomed to fizzle out amidst the lukewarm applause of a somewhat discomfited audience.

II.

I would fain say joyous things about the performance from an histrionic point of view, but with the best of intentions it is not possible to deny that Sir Henry Irving was ill-advised to attempt the characterisation of a person-

age exacting, beyond all other things, full possession of youthful vigour and a thundering voice. I doubt whether in his earlier days Sir Henry's subtle, gentle, I would almost say atmospheric genius, would have been equal to the overwhelming task of ruling the seething masses of uproarious Rome with his voice, where his personality alone could not have sufficed. At any rate, at the present moment, however great and unimpaired are his intellectual faculties, and the trenchant mode of his utterances, Sir Henry labours physically under a disadvantage which no effort could overcome. That there were beautiful moments in his impersonation; that his dignity carried us away even when his voice failed; that in his tenderness—in the few moments of tenderness which the play allows—he just managed to bring across the foot-lights such an impression as only a great actor could make, dealing with such scant material, goes without saying. But on the whole I would have preferred that Sir Henry, if he desired to remain faithful to Shakespeare, should have selected a character riper in years and better suited to the now somewhat delicate fibre of his powers.

Almost the same remarks somewhat transposed, would apply to Miss Ellen Terry. She has ever the indestructible charm of the Terry family, and when she bleaches her locks to matronly white, she is outwardly the picture of a motherliness as sweet and as comely as anything our imagination could well conceive. Where she is not quite equal to the exigencies of the part is in the very scenes where the lovable woman should be merged in the unbinding sternness of the Roman matron. Volumnia was by no means a womanly woman of modern times, but was of the mould which would rather sacrifice her own son than sacrifice Rome; and thus, when Coriolanus comes home bleeding from the battlefield, she greets him with joy rather than with commiseration. Miss Ellen Terry did not understand the bringing out of this forceful side of the character, and as her not too complete mastery of the text led her at times to be halting in diction, the impersonation left on the whole an impression of

wavering and vacillation. In the great Volumnia scene Miss Terry was nearest to greatness, and if, even then, she failed quite to reproduce the poet's will, she at least succeeded in holding the house and dispelling much of the languor which was in the air.

THE COMEDY THEATRE: MR. FORBES ROBERT-
SON'S RETURN: "COUNT TEZMA,"

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS, BY A. N. HOMER.

April 21, 1901.

I.

The impeachment cannot be withheld that some play-goers are sadly lacking in manners. Here is the production of a play by a young man of whom we have never heard before, who nervously and with inexperience treading upon the dangerous ground of the stage, evidently endeavours to give his best and fails to succeed. What is his reward? Not indulgent encouragement of some, not silent disapproval on the part of the others, but a howl of execration almost universal, directed, too, against the wrong man. For the author was not in the house, and the gentleman who appeared in response to the prolonged and derisive call was Mr. Forbes Robertson's innocent manager, Mr. Cotton. Now I would use strong adjectives to characterise such dastardly behaviour. Why I feel so hurt for the author's sake is because this is a failure, the result neither of levity nor of commercial greed, but because the author proves to be inexperienced both in craft and in art. That there is stuff in him I think even the fiercest detractors of this play cannot deny. There are moments of dramatic grip which equal the most poignant scenes which have been wrought in modern drawing-room melodrama. At times, notably in the first act, when there was a card-playing scene stronger than those which have become familiar through the French school, we were rocked

into the belief that a very fresh and bold romanticist had arisen; moreover, his dialogue was full of prettiness and studded with delicate touches which revealed a poetic mind. Unfortunately, as the action—a very ordinary melo-dramatic plot of rivalry in love, gambling, provocation to duel, and finally the union of two hearts primordially destined for one another,—as this long winded tale crawled along like an over-fed boa constrictor, that inevitable feeling of weariness set in which, with coughs and sniffs and sighs and cackle, indicates that the spell is broken. Yet, while running off the right track, and aimlessly meandering in the by-ways of insignificant business, the author from time to time regained control of his main theme, and so it came to pass that in a third act, fatally interleaved with a Hungarian “Czarda” (which our actors danced as if it were a mazurka), the action suddenly resumed its hold upon the audience in a strong scene in which the two rival spirits in the play “had it out,” and paved the way towards the happy ending. But then it was too late. When once an audience has made up its mind that the main theme of a drama lacks interest, there is no salvation, and upon that a play must necessarily flicker out like the cheap oil lamp which no patent mechanism brings to speedy extinction. There is no wish on my part to be unduly severe on Mr. Homer’s maiden effort, and so I hasten to add that, if the faults of his play are vital, there are qualities which augur well for the future. Mr. Homer possesses imagination. The conceit of his play, laid somewhere in an Austrian province, is picturesque. The little atmosphere there is breathes purity, and an amiable conception of the world as it might be. The dialogue has felicitous touches, and through everything permeates that which is most lovable in man—the veneration of woman. A writer who says: “No man knows the good or evil in him until a woman quickens it into life,” indicates that he possesses the sense of the ideal, and whether his firstling be a success, or whether it blights his expectations, there is at least the consolation that he will do better in the future.

II.

Excepting the general remark that stress of circumstances, such as a boisterously hearty welcome to the principal actors, seemed to affect the nerves, and through the nerves, the memory of the players, it may be fairly said that rarely has a play been acted by so much talent and with such ardour for success. If in spite of that the footlights formed a barrier between the actors and the audience, I fear that the fault lay with the material and not with the interpreters. Only two of them, Miss Susan Sheldon and Mr. Frank Mills, had the rich opportunities which render performances memorable, and both seized them to the full. Miss Sheldon was at first almost inaudible through her emotions, but as soon as she had gained confidence she warmed to her part, and gave a portrayal of womanliness in all its prismatic variety that should stamp her as an actress of the future. Mr. Mills, on the other hand, was self-possessed from the first, and his impersonation of the lieutenant who, actuated by rivalry and jealousy, belied his better nature, was a little masterpiece. The character itself was unsympathetic to a degree, but the fine "panache" of the actor redeemed the seamy side. Mr. Forbes Robertson, rejuvenated since we saw him last, was deeply interesting in the study of a man reckless and non-caring, but humanised by love. There was not very much for him to do, but the little opportunities which he had were used to the full.

IMPERIAL THEATRE: "THE ROYAL NECKLACE,"

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS. BY PIERRE AND CLAUDE BERTON.

April 28, 1901.

I.

A theatre, Imperial, not only in name, but truly so in the gorgeous style of its costly marbles and sumptuous sea-green drapery. A play, democratic, in the sense of its being fare for the gallery. Acting so bourgeois that the cotton-umbrella-King, Louis Philippe, would have enjoyed its angularity. Was it really necessary to repeat the mistake of "Robespierre," and go to France for the fabrication of that fancy article which our own gentlemen who believe that art is the enemy of the drama know so well how to turn out? The merest novice in dramatic work can pad a melodrama round such historic figures as Marie Antoinette, Count Fersen, and the Cardinal de Rohan, and if this padding is rendered harrowing by the vision of the guillotine, and the mob decrying the unfortunate daughter of Austria, there is the absolute certainty that indulgent hands will clap approval.

Mr. Berton has done much good work in the past. His *Zaza* is so shrewdly observed, so dexterously built up, that one feels almost sorry to condemn his latest work. He has run the risk of writing to order with a view to clothes rather than to drama, and he must take the consequences. Apparently, what Mrs. Langtry commissioned Berton to write was not a play strong in its unity of form, and in its fairly strict adherence to the

famous necklace story, the truth of which has been told by Count Fersen in his recently-published "Memoirs," but a play which, above all, would afford an opportunity for the actress to indulge in the "Biondi-Fregoli" business of impersonating the Queen and her double. Such a device is inartistic in its inception, and could only be saved by acting of the greatest, not only on the part of the leading actress, but of everybody concerned in the production, comprising thirty-seven speaking characters, five voiceless ladies, six silent female attendants and nine walking gentlemen, to say nothing of soldiers, street boys, street vendors, and other noise makers, enough to fill a small village. But let that pass. Far more interesting to me, as a critic, is the fact that the recent dramas on the subject of Marie Antoinette have gone to that threadbare necklace story, leaving alone the great poignant moment of the Queen's life which began at the post-house of Vincennes, when the post-master recognised her and stopped her flight, which reached the climax in her appearance before Philippe Egalité's Court, and its catastrophe on the Place de la Grève. Here is tragedy for the best melodramatist extant, and yet not unworthy of a poet. In the hands of a Stephen Phillips, a Davidson, a Yeats, something monumental could have been built of this material; for Marie Antoinette with all her faults, her vanity, her fatuousness, her licentiousness and manifest lack of heart, remains a pathetic figure from the very contrast that she was born near the throne of Austria, and, through stress of fate, ended on the scaffold.

Into the play that is before us, a dream picture of the guillotine is, with difficulty, dragged, and the love-story with Fersen is manipulated in such a manner that one neither discovers the right relationship between him and the Queen nor the real feelings which actuated her towards the man who may be said to have been what he called himself—her only friend. I do not say that in the play—and notably in the third act, where Fersen meets the Queen and approaches the question of the necklace—

there is not one scene finely written and capably handled, but the rest is so sketchy, so "biographic," that the tableaux seem to have no connection whatever with one another; even the climax does not strike home.

II.

Mrs. Langtry did her best to master the dual character of *Mdlle. Oliva* and *Marie Antoinette*, and under the circumstances it is not flattery to say that she is a past-master in the gentle art of changing dresses. To that may be fitly added that her Queen is a queenly picture, which in these days of talk about the famous "Gainsborough" Duchess, almost reincarnated what the great painter perpetuated on canvas. Going deeper, I must say that Mrs. Langtry as the Queen was not very impressive; with no note of passion, she tries to disguise its absence by forcing her voice into chords which lack sincerity. When the flame of real emotion should rush from her, Mrs. Langtry is a pouting, vituperative woman, instead of one whose whole soul is shaken to its depth. I say this in order to indicate what would appear to be Mrs. Langtry's right road to success. I have seen her in all the adaptations from the French. I have admired her in "*The Degenerates*," which was a surprise, almost a revelation, and I have come to the conclusion that she is not a character-actress but a comedienne—a comedienne in the French sense of the word, which implies refinement of manner, a pretty wit, and just enough of sentiment to endow a woman with the sweetest attributes of a woman's character. Only, if Mrs. Langtry rightly resolves to cultivate high comedy she must nurture her English, for, strange to say, there is a cockney accent in her pronunciation, which in the great scenes struck most disagreeably. To pronounce "place" like "plice" and "gold" like "gowld" may be mannerism, but it is unpleasant and to an international ear—conscious of its own shortcomings—the dissonance is all the more lacerating.

Mrs. Langtry, who enjoyed, of course, a flattering reception, found an interesting partner in Mr. Robert Taber, who, it may be fairly said, carried the honours of the evening. Mr. Taber is an actor who warms with some difficulty to his part, and whose appearance is not always prepossessing; with him it seems to be a question of dress. But when Mr. Taber once has a strong scene to deal with, he knows how to extract from it all it is worth; and so, after a tame two and a half acts, we had the pleasure of seeing this actor suddenly rise to the height of his power, and thereby save an evening singularly barren of thrilling moments.

THE VAUDEVILLE THEATRE: "SWEET AND
TWENTY,"

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS. BY BASIL HOOD.

THE PRINCE OF WALES' THEATRE: "THE MAN
FROM BLANKLEY'S,"

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS. BY F. W. ANSTEY.

April 28, 1901.

I.

These two authors, who on two consecutive evenings have won the approval of delighted audiences, have both a record which should endear them to every playgoer. The pages of *Punch* have been, year after year, brightened by Anstey's pretty wit, and parodies of Ibsen and other writers which would disarm the most fervent partisan. Captain Basil Hood is the author of many plays, some excellent librettos, and one little fairy tale, "Ib and Little Christina," which is as lovable as Anderson's immortal work itself.

There is a great difference between these two authors, though they divide the honours of having written the two best original plays now running in London. Anstey is brimming over with wit, and into that piquant stream which flows from his pen he just introduces enough sentiment to mingle a little ah! of heart-felt pleasure with the peals of laughter. Basil Hood, on the other hand, is full

of pretty sentiment, and just introduces enough wit into his dialogue to prevent our complaining of a surfeit of honey. Both men are thoroughly healthy-minded, and thoroughly British in the nicest sense of the word. The one keeps a constant, keen and winking eye on the foibles of our middle-class society, and laughs at them in boyish mirth. The other remembers that there is nothing so dear to a Briton's heart as honour, self-sacrifice, and redemption of a partly shipwrecked life by strength of will power. All these elements are harmonised in the play produced at the Vaudeville. In "Sweet and Twenty" we have, as the title would lead us to surmise, a central figure of early womanhood, around whom all the conflicts of the little story are delicately woven. Her dilemma is the love of two brothers; the one morose and studious, the other dashing, as sailors mostly are. These two boys, who run the gauntlet of the story, frequently remind us of Guy de Maupassant's "Pierre et Jean," only in Captain Basil Hood's play the characters are lightly handled with a romantic hand, whilst the great Frenchman has hewn two living statues into the marble of literature. How the story unfolds itself, how the sailor, bashful like a true salt on shore, in his love madness takes to drink, loses his position, and finally, through his love, reclaims his life; how the other brother threatens dreadful things, and does things that are not honourable, but finally bows to the inevitable, is not for me to tell, for it would be robbing the peach of its bloom.

The charm of this play is not the story, it is the delicate, sensitive, amiable way in which it is told, its purity of thought, and its fresh, English-rose-like atmosphere. Moreover, "Sweet and Twenty" lends itself to excellent acting. Miss Ellaline Terriss is charming to behold, and charming in that vein of tenderness which, if it does not run too deep, is all her own. Miss Mary Rorke, one of our few actresses who, like Mrs. Wright, own the maternal accent, was delightful, but only too refined as an old family retainer. Mr. Holbrook Blinn, an actor striking in appearance and in manner, now convinces us that he is

equally good in the portrayal of a young man as he is in that of older characters, while the boy actor, George Hersee, again carried the house by his unaffected child's play. Mr. Seymour Hicks, overworking as usual, gave a poignant impersonation of the young sailor; and no doubt when he has become more rested and less weighed down by the responsibilities of stage management, he will present a wholly consistent impersonation of a thoroughly English character. Mr. Seymour Hicks's versatility is remarkable, and the zeal which he lends to his work leads us to expect much from this youthful artist.

II.

If I liked "Sweet and Twenty," I simply revelled in "The Man from Blankley's." I saw the play under peculiar circumstances, as a continental journey prevented me from being present on the first evening. Thus I went to that usually most dismal of all functions—a dress rehearsal. But, oh! what a delightful afternoon! We have been hearing a great deal lately about "*Le Monde ou l'on s'Ennuie*." Well here is the English world of boredom. The world of suburbia. The world of snobs. The world of radicals run rampant. The world where they talk of "carriage people." The world where the Governess is treated as an object instead of a subject. The world where personal ills and ailments are topics of conversation. The world where the drawing-room is papered with gigantic poppies; where the dining-room has a red and black tablecloth, where the butler, hired for the day, teaches the master manners. The world where refinement is considered in bad taste, and where the tongue only loosens when Bacchus's devilry untightens the rigid reins. Here, my friends, is the *Monde ou l'on s'Ennuie à l'Anglaise*, and when I tell you that the hostess, fearful of No. 13., goes to Whiteley's (Blankley's) to hire a guest, and is rewarded by a visit from a lord, who comes by mistake to the house and ends by marrying the Governess, you may faintly, but very faintly, imagine what awaits you at the Prince of Wales's Theatre.

The first act, in which the guests assemble for dinner, is altogether a masterpiece—Dickens would not have been ashamed of it; and the second act—the interminable dinner party—which begins with soup, fish, and joint, until, near dessert, the uncle of the house mistakes the butler for his usual club attendant, and calls him “waiter,” is a dramatic conceit so bold that one may well ask how any manager had the courage to venture upon it. But Mr. Hawtrey is a safe guide; he knows his stage in its remotest corners, and so he is rewarded “for valour.”

As a rule in this kind of play the third act is the weak point. Not so here. Nothing could be more ludicrous and well-observed than the period of digestion and rumination which followed the wine and viands. The usual song—the usual boring conversation between women—the usual snoring old lady with her hands reposing gently on her robust figure—the usual request to baby to recite—to governess to play—the usual influx of the wine-laden men, and the flickering up of the dying flames of intellect. Then the breaking down of the beautifully constructed fiction, and the revelation that the Man from Blankley’s, reviled by everybody present because they believe him to be a counter-jumper, is a real, live lord, with ancestors reaching back to 1600! And then all these people file out, eating their words and trying to cover up their blunders with soft-sawdered compliments and excuses, and the hero is left with the girl whom he had known and loved long before, in the days when he was a splendid pauper. The love scene, striking in contrast to the boisterous mirth of all that precedes, is not the least winsome part of the play. And thus it comes to pass that, when it is all over, we experience a feeling of contentment such as is inseparable from keen intellectual enjoyment.

TWO PLAYS BY GEORGE CAPUS.

May 5, 1901.

I.

If there is one man in this world who has no right to ask "What's in a name?" it is Monsieur Alfred Capus, the happy author of "La Veine"; for since this play appeared at the Paris Théâtre des Variétés the Boulevards have been ringing with the name and the praises of the new factor in the gaiety of the nation. Yet long before he achieved what may be fitly called celebrity, Alfred Capus was a well-known man. The readers of the *Figaro* will remember with gratitude the good services he rendered, with a pen as sarcastic as witty, to the cause of Dreyfus.

Next comes a series of plays, the best of which, "Rosine," had but a moderate success, although it is now recognised to be a little gem, and is presently to be revived. Another play, "La Bourse ou la Vie," which was an extremely clever study of a topsy-turvy world, created much stir. But as far as the crowd is concerned, Capus has become famous with "La Veine."

The theory which, in a pleasant and not too deep a manner, Capus illustrates in his play, is that Chance will knock some time at every man's door, and that all depends on whether the man is there to open, and whether, when he has opened, he knows what to do with his visitor. And it is to show us that it is not everybody's gift to appreciate a good thing when it flies like a roast pigeon into our mouth, that we are made familiar with the love story of the briefless barrister and his flirtation with the pretty and

virtuous little florist from down below. What the primary attraction was on the part of the florist I do not well know, for frankly the lawyer is an opportunist and a sort of "Bel Ami" in one. But what attracted him towards her everybody can appreciate to the full, for she is a lovely type of womanhood, and she would have been as spotless as an archangel if her station in life had been on a level with that of the man to whom she lost her heart.

Well, these two people, neither very prosperous, join hands and form a union unhallowed by registrar or church. Things go badly, and if it were not for the timely appearance of a former assistant of the florist's, who had thrown her cap to the winds and her lot in with a rich lover, heaven knows what would have become of the briefless barrister and his better half. It is here that chance steps in in the burly shape of the flower-girl's kind-hearted lover.

Everything seems to brighten up; the golden tap is turned on; luxury takes the place of misery, and presently the two couples are feasting in a pretty villa at Trouville.

Now, would you not think that, blessed with prosperity, and, above all, with a woman who would realise the fondest hopes of man, this child of chance, the now well-briefed barrister, would be happy and contented? But such is not the case. As too much familiarity is said to breed contempt, so too much prosperity may engender boredom, and when a man about town is bored, the consequences are inevitable—"Cherchez la Femme." La Femme in this case was a woman with pretty looks, an acute mind and no heart. She soon sees that the barrister is a trifle tired of the holy Charlotte, and she finds a welcome opportunity for a flirtation, harmless to herself, but fatal to the other woman.

Under the disguise of business, the barrister and the demi-mondaine are constantly together, and his love drifts into the quicksands of his newly-begotten passion for the fair temptress. Here, consequently, the play takes a serious turn, and we reach the scene between these two "wildly" married lovers, where the woman realises her

position and speaks her mind to the man who has but poor answers to give her.

The scene is beautiful because it is true, and it can be boldly applied to the case of thousands of women who have given virtue, happiness, peace, and life, for better or for worse, to men unworthy to tie their shoe-strings.

Charlotte leaves him, but the barrister looses the other woman too, for she is tired of her little comedy, and she has better fish to fry. So here we find the man between the Devil and the Deep Sea, with the inevitable result that he sees the errors of his ways, calls back his love, does penance, and proposes marriage.

So far so good.

But it is in the solution of the play that lies its one weakness. If Charlotte had been a woman in another station of life than a shop girl in a very modest and not highly considered way of business, if she had been his mental peer (and that she was not is proved in the second act, where we see her learning grammar and geography), the ultimate marriage could have been understood. As it is, the solution is absolutely antagonistic to the accepted canons of French society. For remember, the barrister has gone into Parliament, and is a man of ambition. Such a man could not perpetuate a "collage" by marriage without incurring the penalty of society's ostracism.

At an English theatre the play could not be produced as it is, and from an artistic point of view the "faux ménage," converted into a virtuous marriage, would make nonsense of the work while robbing it of its particular charm.

It is to be regretted that London has not one single regular theatre where a delicate piece of French art can be produced without being defiled by the process of compulsory naturalisation.

II.

The other Comedy of Capus which has followed in the wake of "La Veine," and has added lustre to the rather anæmic record of the Nouveautés, is called "La Petite

Fonctionnaire," which in English would be alluring under the title of "The Little Post Mistress." Here Capus is entirely himself, that is in a purely jocular vein, with sly little digs at provincial ways and manners.

Not much perspicacity is needed to unravel the intricacies of this dainty little fancy, when I tell you that the little post mistress is a lady "by birth and education," and that she has been sent to this country hole to replace a growling old lady and attend to the postal welfare of the community. Now, this village of Pressigny is blessed with two or three Lotharios, some of whom seek pleasures in Paris from time to time, while others, tied down by the bondage of matrimony, are like Blue-Beard's wife, always on the look out for a little feminine diversion. So the little post mistress, who might have been a sister of the clever little *Préfète* in the "Lion Hunters," soon sets the village ablaze.

One of the rich landed proprietors, Lehardin, sees in her a reminiscence of a sweet love whom he had courted twenty years ago, and falls in love with her. Pagenel, the gay dog of the place who has a little "affaire" in Paris, does likewise; and the Vicomte, the foremost personage of the community, deeply regrets that before the arrival of the post mistress he has offered his hand if not his heart to a moneyed widow.

Now, the fact of the matter is that Suzanne, the post mistress, laughs at Lehardin, and does not care a jot for Pagenel, but has a sneaking fondness for the country squire, who, under a rugged appearance, carries a kind heart.

At the post-office, which has become the meeting place of the village, where Lehardin sends countless and useless telegrams in order to chat with the lady; where Pagenel constantly hangs on the telephone, and where the Vicomte makes sundry purchases of penny stamps, &c., it finally comes to pass that little Suzanne gives herself away and finds that the Vicomte is no longer free. Like a true Frenchman, he says that this is no obstacle, and that things can be satisfactorily arranged after marriage.

She is horrified by such a proposal and goes to the other extreme by accepting from the ridiculous Lehardin (who, by the way, is haunted by his wife, but who has not committed a single matrimonial slip), a pretty little apartment in Paris. But you must understand that the little post mistress did not mean what the uncanny Lehardin expected, and, while accepting the apartment, she draws a line at the first kiss. Then Lehardin finds himself confronted with his infuriated wife, and explains that, even though he may have furnished an apartment for the little post mistress, it does not necessarily follow that there is anything wrong between them. The theory is so amazing that the good old lady changes round from the prosecution to the dock, and humbly begs his pardon.

As for the Vicomte, his little matrimonial trip has been so unsuccessful that one month is sufficient to induce him to sue for divorce. Thereupon the spotless little post mistress is rewarded for her pain and tribulations with a coronet, and a heart thereunto attached.

From first to last the little play is as dainty as can well be imagined. You must not scrutinise too closely, you must not apply the iron rod of logic, otherwise the whole thing will tumble; what you must do is to let yourself go with the author.

The play is sparkling like a bottle of champagne on a hot summer's day. Let us hope that in London all the effervescence will not evaporate, for the plot of these plays is not important; their success is due to the dialogue, the agility and the glibness of tongue of the actors.

A THEATRE FRANCAIS FOR LONDON.

May 12, 1901.

I.

The artistic success which has attended the little German Theatre of London, and the prospect that, perpetuated on a modest scale, it will ultimately be self-supporting, has moved some French friends, both in Paris and in London, to ask me whether there could not be found a way to establish a miniature Théâtre Français in London. My answer was that my hearty co-operation would be given to the scheme, but that its vitality would depend above all on the financial soundness of its basis. I did not allow my friends to cherish the expectation that a French Theatre on a sumptuous footing would have any chance of success. On the contrary, the lesson of the German Theatre has been that while St. George's Hall, with all its drawbacks, is a comparatively prosperous house for performances in foreign languages, a London theatre, with all its vast attendant expenses, must needs spell loss, particularly if the extension of the season over a series of months were contemplated. The reason of this is not so much the smallness of the foreign population, and Englishmen's comparative lack of familiarity with foreign languages, as the fact that a foreigner living in England, who, after all, must be the mainstay of such a theatre, objects to paying London theatrical prices for a performance which he can see much more cheaply abroad. Therefore, unless a great star be the main attraction of a French or German theatre, it is almost hopeless to count on full houses on the half-guinea-stall principle. On the other hand, when

a foreign theatre is run on lines which allow prices on a par with or even below those demanded in the capitals of Germany or France, say, stalls at 6s., and back rows cheaper, it is almost certain that both foreigners and English students of languages will be ready to extend their patronage to the concern. The first point, as far as the public is concerned, is, therefore, that the prices of admission should be moderate, and by subscription—cheap in the true sense of the word.

The next factor of importance to be considered is—can a French theatre in London exist on the certainty of a subscription and the mere chance of nightly receipts? There is only one man in London who could give a satisfactory reply to this. I refer to the veteran manager, Mr. M. L. Mayer, who for many years has pioneered French art and artists in the metropolis. As regards the fruit of his experience, I am almost certain that he will endorse my assertion that for the first two or three years, at any rate, a subsidy is absolutely necessary, even if the company were to be small, the scenery simple, and the expense of working as moderate as is only possible at St. George's Hall. Comparing the results of the first German season at the said Hall—a season which was surrounded by almost insurmountable difficulties, since German theatrical enterprises had fallen into bad odour in London—and calculating the approximate expense connected with the select little band of players, I come to the conclusion that a guarantee of £2,500 to £3,000 is a *sine qua non*. And this figure, I contend, is a very modest one, when it is remembered that the outlay on the smallest theatrical venture in our city for the production of a single play is never less, and that the French season would last at least sixteen weeks, with a repertoire of from twenty to thirty different plays.

The first step, therefore, is to ascertain whether among the London public there is sufficient enthusiasm to furnish the necessary capital in the shape of a guarantee or subsidy. The cause has already some adherents and personally, I shall be glad to give my mite of £50, while my

services in the selection of the repertoire and other matters are, it goes without saying, freely at the disposal of the possible Théâtre Français.

That the French Government would view the prospect with pleasure, and maybe encourage it in some form or other, I have already ascertained in competent quarters. But the initiative must be taken in London, and when it has been satisfactorily proved that the idea meets with sympathetic response I have no doubt that we shall enjoy substantial co-operation in France.

II.

Suppose the Théâtre Français comes into existence, how is it to work? I have already briefly referred to the composition of the company, which, like our German Theatre, should depend on the competency of every member engaged, in preference to the now usual system of surrounding a star with artists of mediocre ability. The manager would, of course, be chosen from one of the several touring companies which, in France and abroad, have achieved success. I think of such men as Frederick Achard, Vast, or Schurmann, unless, indeed, Mr. M. L. Mayer could be prevailed upon once more to take the reins into his competent hands. But France, being well endowed with good touring managers, this part of the question offers but scant difficulty, nor need one fear that the services of clever actors could not easily be obtained. The fact of the matter is that the French provinces, like our own, are overrun by talent which fails to obtain a hearing or a permanent engagement in Paris, and is only too eager to seek a new outlet.

The main question, however, is the repertoire, and as to that, I should like to say a few words in order to make it clear from the outset what policy a London Théâtre Français should, in my opinion, adopt. To be discarded, in the first instance, are all such slippery farces as may be fairly characterised as "Boulevard offal," which generally come to us in a bowdlerised form by the process of

adaptation. The "Comedie Rosse"—that product which, clever though it may be, very frequently renders the presence of ladies in a French theatre embarrassing, not to say undesirable—must also be excluded; and of tragedy in verse, only such specimens should be given as would fall entirely within the scope and powers of the actors. For it must be remembered that the means will be small, and that tragedy, poorly mounted and acted without "panache," as we sometimes see it in London, does not in any way further the cause of art. If, in the company, individual members were found who had particular aptitude as tragedians, it would be far better to give, from time to time, a scene or a monologue from a tragedy in a perfect form than to venture upon a production which would be beyond our forces.

It comes then to this, that the repertoire should be drawn from the great French drama of the eighties—Augier, Dumas fils, early Sardou, Gondinet, and poets such as Musset, Banville, Coppée, and others. Turning to modern writers, London should be made acquainted with those authors who are famous in France and unknown here, and who, during the past ten years, have made a record at the Comédie Française, Vaudeville, Gymnase, and last, but not least, the Théâtre Antoine. Plays by Brieux ("Blanchette," "Robe Rouge," and "Le Berceau"), by De Curel ("La Part du Lion"), by Donnay ("Le Torrent," "Georgette Lemeunier"), by Hervieu ("Les Tenailles"), by Capus ("Rosine," "La Veine"), by Hermant, Becque, Lavedan, Porto-Riche—phalanx so dazzling that the very titles seem overwhelming. This would form the main fare, and if the programme—of course with modifications and amplifications—were consistently carried out, I think that the London Théâtre Français would fulfil a double mission. First, a new world would be opened up to those London playgoers who are not frequent visitors to Paris, and have but a very incomplete conception of what the modern French drama really is. Secondly, and this is a point on which I dwell with loving emphasis, I foresee that our own English

stage would derive considerable benefit from the little French Theatre. This is no mere chimera, for the existence of the German Theatre has induced our managers to turn their minds towards better class German work, and at least three German plays of this season have been acquired for translation into English and production in London. And I hope that, besides affording amusement to many playgoers, an artistic, well-conducted French theatre in London would render signal service towards the improvement of our own stage. At any rate, I think, with Henry IV. of Navarre, that "*Paris vaut bien une messe*," and that the small sum expended on the venture would not be wasted on Intellectual London.

IBSEN'S "PILLARS OF SOCIETY."

May 19, 1901.

I.

"Wot' yer gettin' at?" says the man in the street, when he imagines that a stray glance is ridiculing his precious personality; and something of this feeling pervaded me when, after many years of dormant intimacy, I renewed my acquaintance with the "Pillars of Society" through the interesting performance of the Stage Society.

That the scene of the play is laid in Norway we all know, but how much of that which is said to be Norwegian may be applicable to London, we have never been able to realise so fully as when, in Mr. Oscar Asche, we saw the first competent representative of Consul Bernick in London. Consul Bernick is not merely the representative of a type, he is a type in himself. Remember Jabez Balfour, and you think of Consul Bernick. Remember the firm who swindled the Chartered Mercantile Bank of India with double documents, and you think of Consul Bernick. Remember the Liverpool—or was it Leicester?—solicitor who had a little chapel attached to his office, where he forged mortgages and other deeds in the odour of sanctity, and you think of Consul Bernick. Remember the shipping case of some years ago, in which the owner was convicted of complicity in the dreadful act of scuttling, and you think of Consul Bernick. Remember, in fine, all the books published by famous detectives and Parisian chiefs of public safety, who have more trouble in entrapp-

ing the "Knight of Industry" than the most hardened burglar or murderer, and you still think of Consul Bernick.

I remember well when first I read and saw "Pillars of Society." I was an apprentice in a bank in Amsterdam, and on the very day that the Ibsen book fell into my hands the town was frantic with a terrific scandal. An insurance manager—one of those wonderful old Dutchmen who in the eighties still walked about in the unimpeachable funereal black frock-coat, Gladstone collar, and white tie; who attended church twice on Sunday, to say nothing of Wednesday evening—this worthy was found drowned in a ditch in the Vondelpark. When his affairs were cleared up, what was found? That for years he had played *chassez-croisez* with the funds of nearly all his insurance companies, each of which had a safe at his office, one being replenished from another when a directors' meeting was held. Meanwhile, the old humbug, rigid, earnest, patron of the people, pillar of society, had lived on the fat of the land, preaching the Gospel to the lowly-born, and illuminating the town with the goodness of his character and the greatness of his benevolence. That was Consul Berwick to the life! And so deep was the impression this occurrence made on my then youthful mind, that ever since I have seen Consul Bernick in the many men who publicly practise benevolence while the bells jingle and the trumpets are blown. I repeat it, Consul Bernick is not merely an individuality in the strictest sense of the word. He represents a type. He represents certain accepted conventions which, if they are backed up by sincerity and unselfishness, constitute the mainstay of a manly character, but which, with the slightest *arrière pensée*, degenerate into vice, not to say crime.

Of course, Ibsen, in the days when he wrote the "Pillars of Society," was not the same man who later on created "Hedda Gabler," "The Master Builder," and "Little Eyolf." He was then not untrammelled by theatrical considerations, for he was himself the manager of a poorly-subsided concern. In fact, Ibsen, the author

of "Pillars," stands to Ibsen the creator of "Hedda Gabler," as Wagner of "Rienzi" faces Wagner of "Parsifal." You know what the great master himself said to Professor Hagedorn, when the latter asked his opinion about "Rienzi." "Oh!" he said, "that was written by the other Wagner"; and much the same applies to Ibsen. When Ibsen wrote the "Pillars of Society" there germed already in him that tendency towards the human undefiled, and the mysterious humanised, which is the characteristic of his later work. Lona, the step-sister of Mrs. Bernick, is as clearly the forerunner of, and germane to, Rebecca of "Rosmersholm," as she is in the literary sense the mother of Hilda Wangel in "The Master Builder;" only in the "Pillars of Society" the character is curbed by convention, for in those days the theatre of Norway was not ripe for the realistic reform any more than Ibsen himself. In 1877, when the "Pillars of Society" was written, the whole stage of Europe was under the yoke of that French school which finds its extreme exponents in Scribe and Sardou. It was the school of theatricality, of careful construction and minute preparation, of intense episodes. That Ibsen, like everybody else, was, for the moment, an adept of this school is clearly seen not only by the splendid scene of the cackling village gossips in the first act, and by the insufferable schoolmaster, who is in a manner the reasoner of the play, but most particularly in the third scene where Olaf Bernick, the eleven-year-old little son, has fled to sea in the rotten ship, and, in order to let the cry of the blood do its work, is saved by his mother. We all know very well that this theatrical providence does not apply to life. The child once aboard and the ship afloat, it would be beyond human force for the mother to reclaim the boy, as it would be beyond human force to save the rotten hulk in the raging storm. All this, like many another scene in the play, is poignant with dramatic feeling, but it is the other Ibsen. Far be it from me to make this a matter of reproach. Even now, after twenty-five years of life, this play has lost little of the bloom of youth, for its excessive wordiness can easily

be shorn. It is, indeed, when compared to later work of our own writers and of foreigners, a drama that stands out powerfully by its vigour and the fine drawing of every character, great and small, in an extensive cast. Still, as the "Pillars of Society" has not been seen in London for twelve years, it was perhaps worth while to demonstrate what position it should occupy in the life work of Ibsen.

II.

If I have frequently criticised the performances of the Stage Society because, in my estimation, purely artistic theatres ought to bestow greater care on acting and stage management than commercial undertakings (if it were only to establish the difference), I am now glad to say that the "Pillars of Society" was, on the whole, given with great credit to everybody concerned. My only objection to the performance was that more rehearsal would have been useful, and that in the cast a more careful observation of the ages of the various characters would have helped our imagination. For instance, the Lona, which Miss Constance Robertson played with some charm and more promise, was too young, while the other sister, Martha, rendered with much pathos by Mrs. Charles Maltby, was too old. The result of this was that the uninitiated could not well understand the position of Johan (a most intense performance by Mr. Albert Gran) towards the sisters. Really the situation was this. Johan had been loved by Martha, and mothered by Lona. As we saw it before us, we could hardly believe it conceivable that Martha was young enough to be loved by Johan, whilst, on the other hand, suspicion arose that when Lona went to America with him, their relationship was not—well, brotherly.

In plays of such magnitude as "Pillars of Society," these apparent trifles grow to importance.

As I have named a few who distinguished themselves, I would add the name of Miss Mabel Hardinge, who, as one of the village gossips, not only displayed remarkable

volubility, but facial expression so varied and apposite that she at once rivetted the attention of the audience. One of these days Miss Hardinge will make a conspicuous success as a character actress. To say that Olaf was played by Master George Hersee, is to repeat the obvious—that every woman in the audience silently whispered, “the darling,” and that every married man would have given a small fortune to be possessed of a boy so comely and so intelligent. And now having done with the cast in the main, I wish to pay my tribute to Mr. Oscar Asche, who was not only the organiser of the performance, but also its life and soul in the personality of Consul Bernick. Mr. Asche has done many good things, but none so ambitious, and none so successful, particularly in the first part. During three acts Mr. Asche entirely realised the character in all its outward bluff dignity, its self-sufficiency and its mail-fisted manner of a ruler of men. But the part is excessively long, and, as I have said before, more rehearsal was obviously needed, so that towards the climax Mr. Asche seemed to grow fatigued. But that was only natural when it is remembered that this Titan’s labour, sandwiched between other work, had to be achieved in a short time, for a maximum of two performances. If this play were to be placed on the boards of a regular London theatre, no other man but Mr. Oscar Asche should be selected to impersonate the principal part, for he has in him all that constitutes the making of it. It was a fine effort, worthy of a true artist.

COMEDY THEATRE: "THE SACRAMENT OF JUDAS,"

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS BY LOUIS TIERCELIN.
TRANSLATED BY LOUIS N. PARKER.

May 26, 1901.

They do wonderful things in our stage world, things so incredible that they would appear beyond belief were they told in centres where the theatre is not a mere toy, but a national institution.

Years ago Mr. Grundy wrote a one-act play called "In Honour Bound." It was an adaptation from Scribe, and exceedingly clever in its way. Then Mr. Alexander was in need of a new production, and, applying to Mr. Grundy, he received a five-act drama entitled "A Debt of Honour," which avowedly was an amplification of the comedietta. Of course the thing did not work, and, to the horror of every artistic soul in the community, "In Honour Bound" was tacked on to it as an epilogue. Naturally, failure was written on the face of the undertaking, and one would have thought that such malversations of art would have become impossible after this first futile attempt. But our theatrical people will never grow wise until their pockets are severely touched. What happened the other day? Mr. Forbes Robertson, for whom we all have an affectionate regard as an artist, used Tiercelin's one-act play (which was a little masterpiece in its way) as the basis of a tragedy in three acts. In this case, the blame, however, it is not to be borne by Mr.

Robertson alone, for the author himself lent his hand willingly to a proceeding which any French artist would condemn. The only extenuating circumstance which I could find was that the original one-act play remained intact as the third act of "The Sacrament of Judas." As regards the two preceding acts, they may be picturesque in their way, and they grant us a little peep into the manners of the sturdy folk of Brittany. They also initiate laymen into the fascinations and the gigantic power of the Catholic Church, since they show us how heavily the hand of Rome weighs on those who adopt priesthood. But, in all that, there is very little drama and a great deal of gloom.

The original story is scarcely touched upon in the new superstructure, which, to my mind, is nothing but a retrospective indication of future events. We meet the young Royalist and the young peasant girl whom he loves and leads astray. We also meet the young priest, who wavers strangely between the eternal vow and the peculiar absolution of that vow which has been granted to him by the officer who represents the Republic. But all their doings are uninteresting, because there is no real tension. What saves the play to a certain extent is the very picturesque language which the poet Tiercelin has put into the mouths of his lay figures, and the splendid translation of Mr. Louis Napoleon Parker. At times it sounded like poetry itself, and then the question arose whether it would not have been much better to have discarded prose altogether, and to have used the language of the gods, which covers, as a rule, a multitude of sins.

To waste more words on a play which is doomed to be short-lived, and which ought never to have been selected for a theatre where "run"—not repertoire—is the policy, would be idle. It is one of those experiments which might commend itself for an afternoon at the Theatre Libre, provided always that the manager of such an enterprise could aid and abet a proceeding which, to put it mildly, is inartistic.

Since Mr. Forbes Robertson was the leading member of the cast there was, of course, a silver lining to the cloud. His acting was magnificent. He is the ideal representative of the struggle of conscience, and of the man who forsakes the world, takes the vow, and then vacillates between the mundane and the divine. Miss Gertrude Elliott had but few chances, and it cannot honestly be said that she made the most of them. Her strength is delicacy, and that is also her weakness. Therefore, we scarcely expect her to be dramatic, and to compare her to her predecessor would be needless criticism of a somewhat unpleasant nature. Mr. Ian Robertson was again remarkable as an officer of the Revolution period. It is not too much to say that he embodied that period in his personality. One longs to see this gifted character-actor in a part which is not merely a sketch of minor importance. On the whole, the acting was fairly efficient, although Mr. Ernest Hendrie, as the old fisherman, was as melodramatic as old fishermen at that Adelphi used to be. But that may have been due to the play which, as it now stands, is at best melodrama with one dramatic act, whilst in its original form it was drama undefiled, with a touch of real tragedy.

“MARIANA,”

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS BY JOSE ECHEGARAY.

TRANSLATED BY JAMES M. GRAHAM.

May 26, 1901.

I.

If the interesting book about the Spanish stage, which recently appeared in Paris, is not mixing truth with fiction, the Spaniards show their love for the theatre in a somewhat extraordinary manner. One of their little ways is to reach the playhouse late, and to hold levées in their boxes, undisturbed by the performance which is proceeding on the stage. About the middle of the evening the audience seems to grow interested in the play, and the more closely they listen, the more intensely the climax is handled by the author. I give you all this for what it is worth, since my own sojourn in Spain in the summer time has been too short to verify the facts, although I have often heard that cackling is as much an entertainment at the Spanish theatre as listening. Nor would I assert that the Peninsula stands alone in this glory, for the “late-comer” nuisance flourishes in London without abatement, and the little conversations which are held—notably by so-called society people—while the actors are trying to make themselves heard in a darkened playhouse, are amenities with which every one of us is familiar to our cost.

Now, doubtless some will say, “What on earth

has all this to do with 'Mariana'? we want the play criticised, not the audience." Strangely enough, however, these remarks about Spanish audiences are very apposite as an introductory criticism of Echegaray's play, for they explain a great deal, and may, therefore, according to the French proverb, lead to a rich measure of condonement. To put it shortly, "Mariana" is a play, two acts of which are drowned in oceanic volubility, for no other purpose than what Sardou used to call the exposition. Only Sardou was satisfied with one explanatory act spiced with dramatic incidents, whilst Echegaray lays the foundation of his play in two acts, without giving us the slightest clue as to what is going to happen when the drama really begins. Of course, this must be most gratifying to the gossips of Madrid and Seville; but when we go to the playhouse at 8.30 sharp, and by 10.10 p.m. have not yet arrived at a conclusion as to what Senora Mariana is driving at, or, rather, whither the author is driving her, we get rather tired of these futilities. What is the position of the lady? She is immensely rich—some half of Mexico is said to belong to her. She is a widow, and of course there are suitors galore. She loves one man who loves her in return with an ardour almost superhuman, nor has he any designs on her fortune. There is no reason why the course of true love should not run smooth. Yet the lady trifles with this man, and submits him to a kind of moral torture which by no means enhances our admiration for her character. And as they bandy words of no consequence, Mariana suddenly tells him a long story—a dream she calls it—but, in fact, the story of her life, which begins with a mother faithless and led away, and ends with a husband unfaithful and foreign to Mariana's nature. It goes without saying that the sadness spread over this story deeply impresses Daniel, her suitor, and that he loves her more than ever. The curtain might now well drop on a "happy ever after," but no—the second act only is over, and in the third we shall learn the true reason of the play's existence. Now it is disclosed, through the

learned discourses of a kind of antiquarian maniac, that Daniel is the son of a certain Don Felix, who was the seducer of Mariana's mother. You see the conflict. Love may survive—marriage is impossible. Mariana must escape from love at all costs. There is but one way—she accepts the suit of an elderly General who had long since offered her his hand. This situation, poignant as it is, strongly reminds one of "The Ironmaster," where it was contrived with equal effect but less vehement surprise. Here again the play has reached its final climax, but Echegaray, always fervent and inclined to drift into exaggeration, must needs show us what is going to happen after the marriage. That can be guessed—at least, in part. On the night of the wedding, Daniel penetrates into Mariana's room. She, in spite of her love, and recalling the fate of her mother, screams for assistance. The husband appears, and shoots—whom do you think?—the lover? No! He shoots Mariana, because he had forewarned her that, as a strong character, he would, if it were necessary, not disdain strong measures. When Mariana is agonising on the floor, the husband asks the lover; "Are you armed?" "Yes," says the other. Then the Castilian makes an elegant bow towards the door, and we understand that these two men are going to fight. Two shots—Curtain! The house is lighted up again, but we are in the dark as to who fell for the sake of Mariana's honour.

II.

It would be doing scant justice to this play to relate the intrigue without saying, at the same time, that the story is its weakest part. In fact, although I have tried to tell it soberly, and without any attempt at mockery, I could not help smiling as I proceeded, for extreme violence of occurrences always goes dangerously near to the ludicrous, and unless the audience had been in a deferential frame of mind, there is no saying how the last act, with its shocks and its shots, would have been taken. But it is not as a story-teller that Echegaray

excels—it is as a sculptor of interesting characters such as may seem foreign and over-strung to us, yet are not impossible in the South of Europe. For one thing, the language in which these people drape their thoughts is not of our lips, and however cleverly Mr. Graham has translated the play (the best translation of Echegaray yet given to the English stage), there is no getting away from the fact that the peculiar aroma of Spanish grandiloquence is lost. It is impossible for us to imagine that a man who threatens you with legal prosecution should wind up his letter with, "I am your servant who kisses your hand." Yet such is Spanish business style, and, taking this as a keynote, you can readily fancy how Spaniards will express themselves when they talk of love and passion. The very things in the dialogue which strike us as exaggerated and sometimes as tedious, are the charm of the play in the original language, and it is from this standard that we must pronounce our judgment. Therefore, whilst admitting that from our point of view, dramatically and ethically, "Mariana" is not a good play—certainly not one of the best of the three score and ten which Echegaray has written—the fact remains that as a bizarre specimen of foreign playwriting it deserved to be seen in London. Whether Mrs. Patrick Campbell was well advised in placing it in the evening bill, the immediate future will teach us. Personally, I think that the gloomy ending will greatly jeopardise the play's chances with our playgoers, and if they go at all to see "Mariana" it will be solely on account of Mrs. Patrick Campbell's truly brilliant performance, next to which comes Mr. George Arliss's very diverting impersonation of the old antiquary. Since Mr. John Hare has temporarily retired, it may be safely said that Mr. George Arliss is his legitimate heir-apparent.

Now, as for Mrs. Patrick Campbell, my experience is that with every new performance her talent shows signs of fine maturing; there is less mannerism, the voice is mellowing, there is more palpitation in her utterances. However, long periods, such as the description of the

dream in the second act, are still somewhat beyond her grasp. Mrs. Campbell has yet to learn how to modulate her intonation—to husband her forces; in fine, to put it technically, how to “break up” her speeches. For that she requires a stage manager of the very first order, one who does not improvise variety by making Mrs. Campbell’s interlocutor drag his chair from one part of the room to another, as if such movement had any other meaning than ordinary stage trickery. What the stage manager ought to have told Mrs. Patrick Campbell is that, in order to cope with the length of her speech, she should have followed Duse’s example by not raising her voice at all, and never exceeding the conversational tone until the one dramatic moment is reached—the moment in which Mariana tells how, as a child, she witnessed the flight of her mother. These remarks apart, Mrs. Patrick Campbell was throughout deeply interesting, always powerful, and, in the last act, intense to such a degree that I would fain describe it as something higher than power. It was a performance which will add greatly to her reputation as an actress, and which would have been more noteworthy if the Daniel of Mr. G. S. Titheradge had been more acceptable. But Mr. Titheradge had none of that ardour which we are wont to associate with the love of meridionals. In a picture of hazy domesticity, such as “Grierson’s Way,” or “Hedda Gabler,” Mr. Titheradge is admirable, but there is a wide gulf between the subdued affections of the London suburban or the Norwegian and the flaring passion of the true Spaniard. They are as different as the placid moonlight is from the intense rays of the southern midday sun.

COURT THEATRE: "WOMEN ARE SO SERIOUS,"

ADAPTED FROM THE FRENCH PLAY, "CELLES QU'ON
RESPECTE," BY M. PIERRE WOLFF, BY BRANDON THOMAS.

June 2, 1901.

There is no particular reason why Mr. Brandon Thomas should have called this play "Women Are So Serious." It is a debatable question indeed whether women are serious, or whether when they believe themselves to be serious they are not often very foolish. I take it that we must accept the title, like the play, as a skit on certain young wives, who, imagining that they are neglected by their husbands, seek consolation in the doubtful addresses of so-called "tame cats." You have here a very charming starting-point for a comedy. The husband is what the French call a "Bicyclette-maniac." He is so fond of the wheel that he forgets the wife, and adds insult to injury by wobbling his legs about while in her presence as if he were peddling away time. The wife, on the other hand, a trifle feather-brained, amorous and romantic of disposition, is naturally fair game for the first man who, according to her fancy, possesses all those qualities which, in her eyes, her husband lacks. When the man comes, not with evil intentions, but because he is a sort of Don Juan by nature, it is, as a matter of fact, not he but she who opens the quick fire that may lead to destruction. The lady, however, is as white as a lily; and the would-be lover, who is a gentleman after all, draws the line at co-correspondence with the wife of his friend—there is nothing

worse than making an appointment with her at the National Gallery, and finally enticing her to take a cup of tea at his flat. Really, he does not care a jot for the lady, whilst she—women are so serious—lets go, and gently prepares a little scheme with a *dénouement* of divorce and re-marriage. To these tribulations of Don Juan are to be added the fact that in a moment of foolishness he had promised the eternal vow to a hospital nurse of manners not unimpeachable and of irascible temperament. He also feels a budding weakness for a young widow, who is the friend of his would-be “*chère amie*.” We won’t go through the tangle of it all, but will come to the one exceedingly clever climax of the play, in which the love-lorn lady, in order to obtain a divorce, provokes a quarrel with her husband, who thereupon seeks advice from Don Juan. Now, divorce is precisely what the latter wants to avoid, and so we stand before the pretty dilemma of the would-be lover endeavouring to dissuade his friend from divorcing the wife, who is anxious to obtain her freedom in order to marry the man who is her husband’s counsellor!

Unfortunately, in English, all this loses a good deal of its savour because it is purified for what the Frenchman calls “the needs of the case.” In Paris, where the “tame cat” is not quite the same inoffensive animal as in London, but where his claws mostly remain unclipped, the atmosphere of the play was truly cerulean. And here is the danger of adaptation which I have so often pointed out in these columns. The French and the English are, outwardly at least, so different in their views of morality, that when you have a play the Parisian sky of which is, as I have said, truly cerulean, and you try to introduce, in order to satisfy the British public, a touch of that haze which mostly overhangs our land, we do not beget that peculiar charm which a light London fog sometimes possesses, but we arrive at a total solar eclipse. In other words, to leave imagery alone, the gaiety of the Gauls remoulded into the discreet mirth of the Briton leads to something which is neither Gallic nor British, and there-

fore nondescript. It is, in fact, what a cockney would call "no class."

Now, I do not say that, bowdlerised and purified, white-washed, starched and mangled, a play like Wolff's does not remain amusing even when it has passed under the iron of Mr. Brandon Thomas's somewhat heavy method; but one feels all the time a sort of "might have been," a kind of "what have I lost?" and a not unnatural craving for a missing link (of impropriety?), which is as a condiment to a square meal. If, on the other hand, you could believe that the dry-cleaning process which has been applied to this play has entirely ousted any suspicion of impropriety you are quite mistaken. The thing is not quite proper—cannot be quite proper—because, according to our ideas of morality, any attempt to estrange the affections of your friend's wife—or, in fact, of any wife—is akin to the greater sin itself. But, fortunately for us, and particularly for those of us who have to write dramatic criticism, there is such a thing as an accommodation with heaven. Where comedies and farces are concerned we are told that we can enter into a deed of arrangement with our principal creditor in dramatic life, Mrs. Grundy, the lady who, stern in her morality when real art is concerned, gently draws the veil over her blushes when, in the lighter fare, straight things sometimes turn into crooked little ways.

All said and done, Mr. Brandon Thomas has succeeded in turning an ingenious French play of great possibilities—the Anglicisation of which offered difficulties almost insurmountable—into a fairly acceptable pseudo-English comedy, which would be thoroughly successful if it were better acted. In a cast not all too long there were only three who caught the spirit of the play, and acted it for all it was worth. I refer to the charming Miss Ellis Jeffreys; the ever buoyant George Giddens, whose *bon-homie* is as spontaneous as his little outbursts of comical wrath are amusing; and Mr. R. C. Herz, who, as the knowing butler, managed to build up a neat piece of characterisation out of half-a-dozen lines. All the others, full of good intentions, never came near the true essence of

comedy ;—some were deliberate, some melodramatic, some immature, with everything to learn. In fine, to use words not complimentary but descriptive, they dragged the piece along at an elephantine rate. Whether this will improve when the first-night nervousness has vanished, time will teach ; but in spite of much amusement during the first production of this play, I became convinced that it is not only women who are so serious, but that this applies to both the men and women of the stage in whom the art of comedy is gradually nearing the vanishing point.

GREAT QUEEN STREET THEATRE: "A LADY FROM TEXAS,"

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS. BY MRS. T. P. O'CONNOR

June 2, 1901.

It would break her heart—so said Mrs. O'Connor when the curtain had fallen upon prolonged plaudits, and risen again upon a charming lady bowing and ready with a speech—break her heart, if we were too severe on her firstling. So, under the circumstances, it would behove us to be gentle. But, really, it was not necessary for Mrs. O'Connor to invoke clemency and—tacitly—the chivalry of men, for even the hardest among us could not honestly deny to the fair authoress the possession of that peculiar gift which is best summarised as dramatic instinct; and she possesses something more in her faculty of writing a dialogue neatly phrased and polished beyond the dreams of our average dramatist.

That dramatic instinct—dormant in the first act, drifting into somnolence again in the third—asserts itself with the unmistakable vigour in the middle of the play, when the lady from Texas in a single scene cuts all the leaves of her book of life, and then reads us a few extracts, delineating in few but telling lines the entire subtle fabric of Trans-oceanic femininity. We, of the soberer old-world shores, may not entirely endorse those free-and-easy manners of progressive American widows nor relish their twangy ejaculations from excessively yawning mouths and tongues all too glibly moved; we

may see no glory in fortunes built on "meat pies," nor pride in determined "dead-sets" on every man—particularly if that man hides his personal insignificance under ducal strawberry-leaves. But, after all, since meat-pie manufacturers, porcopolists, oil and steel trustees, &c., have made ingress into our peerage, we have to deal with them, or rather their daughters, as a potent, an irrepres-sible factor of society.

Now, the widow from Texas whom Mrs. O'Connor introduces is—mannerisms apart—a most agreeable specimen of her class. She is knowing, cunning, cute; she carries all before her; lion-huntress herself, she is a match for all fortune-seekers; but, withal, she is a good "pal." She will strike a bargain and stick to it "until death does us part." Given such a central figure, fairly consistently moulded, until, after the conquest of the coveted Duchess's coronet she apes rather than imitates our "haute voilée," the play has some points of success in its favour. The rest does not very much matter, albeit that, among the puppets around, there is one splendidly drawn character of an Irish Jack-of-all-hearts, and a delicately drawn, but indifferently acted, married couple who drift apart for awhile, because he is cold and she—well, what Maupassant called "misunderstood."

These details will suffice to indicate that Mrs. O'Connor's play is, in the first instance, dependent on the "star" who enacts the Lady from Texas, and that, generally, it is often too irrelevant in detail to be satisfactory, in spite of its cleverness.

Fortunately, in Miss Kitty Cheatham, the bright particular astral body on whom a play may successfully revolve was found. This vivacious lady is a true child of her race; she carries all before her; she has wit and brains, and also those pretty little touches which render American women lovable. That there are a few stripes across the star is scarcely to be wondered at, when we are alive to the difference between English and American acting. Where our artists strand on the sands of too much reticence, the Transatlantic actors sometimes

discomfort us by their boundless exuberance. That was Miss Cheatham's little fault in the third act; but otherwise she was delightful. Mr. Leonard Boyne, too, when he felt his skates well under his feet, glided along with splendid agility. He is as Irish in manner and speech as Miss Cheatham is American—a great compliment!

ROSTAND'S "L'AIGLON."

June 9, 1901.

I.

In his dedication of "L'Aiglon" to his little son, Rostand makes it clear that this play of his is not a work written for a specific cause, as some felt inclined to believe, but that it is simply the story of Napoleon's unfortunate son, who died twenty years old from consumption, engendered by disappointment. In reading the play one is struck by Rostand's careful execution of this project, and more particularly by the faithful manner in which he has transplanted historical figures to the stage. "L'Aiglon," as literature, must not be lightly judged, and I, for one, when I read the book—one year after the play's production, because it had been retarded by Rostand's illness—turned back to my history of France in order to ascertain whether there was, in the young King of Rome, that stuff and fibre with which the poet has adorned him. For common belief has always stamped the son of Napoleon as the weak product of a loveless union. Now, undoubtedly, Napoleon's son was weak, if not in the ordinary sense of the word. We find in history as Rostand describes it, and particularly in the charming education scene, that the boy from the beginning was kept, as it were, in a gilded cage, that he was taught to ignore the deeds of his father, that his tutors endeavoured to imbue him with the Austrian spirit rather than with that of the Napoleonic legend. To say that this child, subjugated from his youth, acquiesced in the situation, is to do injustice to his

memory; for if he carried one thing with him into the grave, it was adoration for his father, and an insatiable craving to emulate him. Alas, it was not to be! At the very time when his horizon began to show some lighter points, when his commission in the Austrian army gave him greater freedom of movement and of intercourse with other people, the deadly disease attacked him with full force, and within a year the eaglet had fluttered towards the eagle.

One must comprehend all this well in order to derive from Rostand's play such enjoyment as there is in it. Compared to "Cyrano" it is not a play of progress, but one of retrogression, yet not in the accepted sense of the term. In "Cyrano" Rostand dealt with a character about which the world has hazy notions—a character romantic in every way, a character lending itself, therefore, magnificently to idealisation. In "L'Aiglon," too, idealisation may play a great part, for is not the background of this tragedy the great Napoleonic legend? But behind that background there stands an archangel, sword in hand. It is History, ever ready to chastise the author when he deviates from the path of truth. Rostand, fully alive to the fact that in the main every one of his hearers in Paris might—I say might designedly—be able to correct him, has adhered to history with a fidelity so unswerving that it has gone against the merits of his play as a work of art. Take the Duke. Take Emperor Franz, always bonhomme, always ready to be petted, yet a narrow-minded tyrant in his way. Take Metternich, as fine a specimen of the man "who lies abroad for the benefit of his country" as ever was called an Ambassador or a Minister. Take Marie Lousie, who, once delivered from Napoleon, was by no means the namby-pamby woman we see her in novels and plays. In fact she was an *amoureuse* and imperious—a true daughter of Hapsburgh. Take all these people with whom the student has some acquaintance, and you will, at least, place to the credit of Rostand that he has vitalised historical figures with immense dexterity; that he has introduced the element of

romance with the great scene—I would fain say the one great scene of the play—in which Metternich drags the boy to a looking-glass, and asks him whether a man with such a brow, such eyes, such forehead, such facial expression, is the anointed successor of the great Napoleon. This scene alone proves how great is the dramatic power of Rostand. Suddenly, when it stands before us, when we see how the servant of the Crown dares to humble the inheritor of its lustre, we realise the immense misery, the unspeakable tragedy, which was laid in the cradle of Napoleon's only son. For this scene alone would I sacrifice the evening, for the rest somewhat barren of enjoyment. It is the one moment of the play which strikes the heart—the one moment which obliterates the art of the theatre and brings us in contact with human feelings unbridled by the limitations of the stage. For let us—all of us—be candid, and admit that which is undeniable. “*L'Aiglon*” is not a play to be enjoyed at the playhouse. You may be beguiled at times by the forceful language and patriotic fireworks; the “*Eaglet*,” the “*Tricolore*,” and the “*Marseillaise*,” they may at times stir you as our “*Absent-minded Beggars*” do, when with drum and fife they march in the morning to St. James's Palace to relieve the guard. But these emotions are not truly dramatic; they are merely martial, and have nothing to do with this play in particular. No! if we want to know what “*L'Aiglon*” is, forget Sarah Bernhardt, forget Coquelin, forget the pyrotechnics of eloquence, and the multi-coloured display on the stage. Take the book and read it—preferably under the dome of nature—skip page after page; the scene with the tailor, the scene with the soldiers—all these episodes of irrelevancy, and study the character of Napoleon's son as one would study a Hamlet. Then there is an intellectual feast, the tragedy of man written by a feeling pen in the language of the gods.

II.

You see where I am drifting? Why mince matters? Inartistic as I find it for a woman to impersonate parts

whose only saving clause is their being acted in a masculine manner, I harbour a sort of prejudice against the latter-day experiments of Sarah Bernhardt. I cannot derive from her genius that pleasure which "La Dame aux Camelias," "Frou, Frou," aye, even "Fedora," "Theodora," and "La Tosca," vouchsafe me. Moreover, rushing about from hemisphere to hemisphere, playing to audiences indiscriminate and, therefore, to be kindled by effects, the powers of Sarah Bernhardt have undoubtedly suffered. There is here no soiling of progressive age—there is soiling produced by unceasing globe-trotting. If I were a mathematician, given the length of a speech and the tendency of its climax, I could calculate with precision just when Sarah Bernhardt would ramble her words in un-understandable rapidity, when she would halt, when she would raise her voice and pronounce the words staccato, and when with one mighty rush, she would start "tigering" as only she can tiger. I do not say that, to the uninitiated, this may have no charm, but, as you know, too much familiarity is apt to breed contempt, or let us say, loss of consideration; and that is precisely what I feel when in Sarah Bernhardt's creations of the last five years I observe an utter sameness, and no great development of any new character either in intonation, in the evolution of her conceptions, or the style of her general method. Take her Hamlet and clothe him in the white uniform of Reichstadt, and Hamlet is Reichstadt. Or take Reichstadt and drape him in the black velvet of Hamlet, and Reichstadt is Hamlet. It does not change, it is the same thing with the one difference of language. Of course, Sarah Bernhardt still appeals immensely to Fashion. She is apt to drive the ordinary playgoer into frantic enthusiasm, for with all her faults she is, as she ever was, a great actress. She knows her business as perhaps no one has known it before her. She measures her effects with the precision of a railway time-table. Her fund of boisterous passion is still infinite, and her personality is full of magnetism. The picture of Napoleon's son is perfect; it is with the inner man that I

am ill pleased. Rostand, who, of course, would tell you that Sarah Bernhardt realises the "Aiglon" of his dreams, has laid down in his poem quite a different creature from that of the actress. Rostand's "Aiglon" is Napoleon's son of history. Sarah Bernhardt's creation is the Duke of Reichstadt of the stage. True, Sarah Bernhardt indicates the incipient consumption by a little cough in the first act, but otherwise her "Eaglet" is so forcible, so over-bubbling with vigour of soul and body, so sonorous in voice, so manly in action—but for the little sways in dialogue which the author allows—that we get quite a different personality from that the book leads us to expect. To sum it up, as an pictorial effort, as an effort in rhetoric, as a melodramatic creation, which should appeal not to the French only, but to all the more or less civilised peoples of the universe, "l'Aiglon" of Sarah Bernhardt may be called great. But from the point of view of art there is much to say against it, and although, so far, all I know about the American "Eaglet" of Miss Adams is founded on hearsay and reams of criticism, I should not be surprised if the verdict of one of the leading American critics was correct, when he placed his own countrywoman above Sarah Bernhardt. Nor is this so very astonishing. Explosive art we may revere for tradition's sake, but the law of change has marked its doom. Duse has come. Réjane has come. Antoine has come. Annie Russell has come. The Deutsches Theater in Berlin has become the stronghold of modern art—the art which is more akin to nature than art itself. And thus our enjoyment of the older school has become limited. We respect it still—I would even say we venerate it in the magnificent eloquence, the finesse of speech of a Coquelin, who was wholly admirable as Flambeau; but the days of exaltation are gone by.

ROBERT BUCHANAN AS A DRAMATIST.

June 16, 1901.

I.

In the days when wild storms were whirling around the devoted head of Mr. Clement Scott, because in that famous interview he had stated things which perhaps had better remained unsaid, it is reported that Mr. Robert Buchanan exclaimed, "Ah! they are quite right, there are plenty of virtuous women on the English stage, but only half-a-dozen actresses." It characterises the man. He was always dramatic, trenchant, mordant. What he said was invariably clever, but under a multitude of words he hid an inner meaning which betokened a somewhat soured, and not invariably just, view of the world in general. By nature impulsive, romantic, bellicose, Robert Buchanan could never let well alone, and fighting was to him the breath of his nostrils. There is scarcely a literary man of distinction, certainly not a well-known critic, in London with whom Robert Buchanan has not had his skirmishes and his battles. He resented Archer's adverse criticisms of his plays with ponderous assaults not altogether of an impersonal nature; and if Archer once called him a "cuttle-fish," he fairly represented the position which Robert Buchanan then occupied in the aquarium of the literary world. Robert Buchanan has belaboured George Moore; he has denounced Clement Scott, for whose fearlessness as a critic he had always sincere respect until a play written for Mrs. Langtry provoked an unfavourable notice. Then Robert, irate to bursting, stepped upon the

stage, a weighty manuscript in his hand, and spoke to the audience words which amounted to this—that he was proud to be hated and persecuted by a man like the dramatic critic of the *Daily Telegraph*. Now, as a matter of fact, Mr. Clement Scott had mostly been lenient to the dramatic work of Robert Buchanan, and will probably be consoled by the idea that he is not the only member of the critical fraternity whose hatred was preferred to his sympathy. From time to time Mr. Robert Buchanan, in these very columns, made slighting references to the work of the present writer, and although I suspect that he had a sneaking fondness for my method, he never neglected to point out that somewhere there must be a “bee in my bonnet,” the particular species of apiculture being called, *Apis Ibsensis*. Personally, I did not mind this at all, but what did grieve me in the manner of his attack was that Robert Buchanan often gave vent to his feelings to such an extent that he even once assailed a successful woman in her family circumstances. I refer to Mrs. Craigie, whose great success in “The Ambassador” entitled her to take rank among our dramatists. This so angered Mr. Buchanan that he devoted an entire article not only to demolishing the play, but to ridiculing the lady because she was a favourite of society and her father a successful manufacturer of a patent medicine. Through all this there ran a feeling which, in an ordinary human being, we would call not merely jealousy, but by a name less condoning and more ungraceful. But Robert Buchanan was not an ordinary man, and in his heart of hearts I do not think he was even a jealous man. He laboured, and not wrongly, under the impression that the world did not understand him—that it did not esteem him at his proper value, and was ever ready to proclaim “prophet” the one who happened to be the spoilt child of popular favour. He called the world badly stage-managed, and perhaps from his point of view he was right. There were days when Robert Buchanan was almost the leading star in our poetic firmament, and when there was every reason to believe that one day the laurels of the Court-poet

would crown his brow. There were days when writing "God and the Man" and "The Shadow of the Sword," both romances of great power, he bade fair to be one of the most prominent novelists of the period. There were days when, adapting Fielding's "Tom Jones" to the stage in that charming play "Sophia," which ran for 500 nights, there was every hope that Robert Buchanan would be the champion of a rejuvenated romantic drama. None of these hopes have been entirely fulfilled, although it can hardly be said that they were wholly blighted. In every branch of literature, as a poet, as a novelist, as an essayist, as a dramatist, Robert Buchanan has done some work which is far above the average, which belongs to literature and deserves to outlive its author. Curiously enough, with all these splendid gifts, this unrivalled productiveness, this facility for wielding the pen and generating thought, the work of Robert Buchanan has not rooted among the multitude, nor found among the literary world the recognition it deserved. To say that in his case it was not the work itself, but the man, who was at fault, is to endorse in a qualified manner the words cited above—that, with regard to some of us players, the world is indeed badly stage-managed.

II.

I must leave it to others to express their opinion on the poet and the novelist—my domain in these columns is the drama, and about Robert Buchanan as a dramatist I will say a few words. Letting my thoughts drift back over a space of sixteen years, and comparing the output of Robert Buchanan with that of all his contemporaries, I arrive at the conclusion that as far as productiveness is concerned he is *facile princeps*. He has written more than Arthur Pinero and Henry Arthur Jones together. He has produced melodramas by the dozen, adaptations by the score, comedies in quantity; he has written in prose and in verse; he has adapted novels of the eighteenth century and his own, has rendered famous French plays

familiar to English audiences ; and there was a time when almost every new calendar month brought a fresh play from his pen into temporary prominence. I say, designedly, temporary, for the greater part of his work was temporary, if not ephemeral in the strictest sense of the word, since he enjoyed almost unprecedented runs at the Vaudeville with his adaptations of "Sophia," "Clarissa Harlowe," and such like, while his melodrama, "Alone in London," is still running merrily in the provinces. But for all that, few of his histrionic efforts have come to stay in the Pantheon of our dramatic literature.

I have often meditated why this is so. Buchanan undoubtedly had the gift of the theatre. His command of language was forcible and abundant. He had an eye for the picturesque, and his vein of sentiment was rich if it was not deep. His dexterity was uncommon. According to his own confession, when busy in the work of adaptation, he never followed the original slavishly, but perused it once or twice, then clapped the book to, and straightway reconstructed the play off his own bat. And yet, endowed with all these master qualities, most of Robert Buchanan's stage-work was unsatisfactory. You felt, as it were, that there was a something missing—an indescribable something, lacking which, one's attention, momentarily caught, was not so strongly held as it should be by work well above the commonplace. After much reflection I believe that his deficiency is best defined as want of stamina. His first and foremost aim seemed to be to render his plays picturesque and correct in form, while he was also at pains to give his characters plausibility by putting into their mouths long explanations of their acts. The result of this was, inevitably, a certain ponderosity of style which was fatiguing, not to say irritating. Moreover, the desire to render the drama itself subservient to its form, induced him to leave much unexplained which, though it may have been clear to himself, was not so to the audience. Thus in nearly every play of his there was an air of unreality which frequently spoilt its chances of success. His last acts were mostly inconclusive, and brought a well-

worked-up action to a lame termination, and as in his plays he was over anxious not to offend our moral susceptibilities, he frequently broke nature on the wheel in order to give that tone which he believed to be in harmony with the ideas of his audiences. A glaring instance of this method of working was his adaptation of Daudet's "Fromont Jeune," anglicised as "Partners," which, after a beginning almost as charming as the book itself, drifted into painful sentimentality.

If much cannot be said of his dramatic work in general—if most of it has gone the way of all flesh—there are at least some of his plays which, if mentioned, will call up pleasant recollections. I have already spoken of "Sophia" and "Alone in London"—a most thrilling melodrama which I have seen half a dozen times with pleasure—and I would add to them his delightful play "Sweet Nancy," his original though somewhat hyperfanciful "Charlatan," his extremely clever adaptation of "A Man's Shadow," which added lustre to Mr. Tree's career, and his last two comedies, "The Romance of a Shopwalker" and "Two Little Maids from School" ("Les Demoiselles de St. Cyr," by Dumas), both of which reminded us that, after a long silence, there was life in the old dramatist yet. The stage, therefore, owes its little debt of gratitude to the poet who is gone; but, even more than the stage, the actors are indebted to Robert Buchanan. He has given innumerable chances to our players, and more than one reputation—I need but refer to Miss Winifred Emery—found its basis in the work of a man whose pugnacity often led his critics to do him scant justice. He was a strong figure in our dramatic world, and, if not altogether a sympathetic one, the fault was not entirely his. He wanted "stage management" in many ways, like the rest of the world of which he complained so bitterly.

REJANE AS SAPHO.

June 23, 1901.

I.

It would be interesting to know what Leon, the son of the great Daudet, thought when he read the notorious book which his father wrote for him as a present on his twentieth birthday. I know full well what I thought when I was twenty, which time coincided with the appearance of "Sapho." I considered it a highly moral book, a book to be a guiding star in a young man's life—a book containing a dreadful warning against wasted careers and that romanticism which is the privilege and the weakness of our youthful age. I saw merely the object lesson contained in the book, and not its real meaning, which gilds an ill-spent portion of life in such a manner that it is more alluring than deterring. "Sapho," as a book, is like one of those erotic poems which, after saying many naughty things, suddenly ends up with an envoi, which is not unlike the honourable flag which conceals a contraband cargo. To say that "Sapho" is a moral work is to speak with the optimism of twenty, when every goose is a swan, and every Jill seems to be a mate to the Jack who is one's self. To say, at this juncture, that "Sapho" is an immoral book, is to pronounce a truism which is beyond the pale of discussion. What is it then? Well, simply an extremely clever novel written by a man who, having struggled through life, knows it to the full, and casts the eye of leniency on those weaknesses of the flesh to which, in Paris, at least, nearly every youth is heir. Nor will I do

the injustice to Daudet to say that "Sapho" is entirely divorced from art. Certainly, it is lurid. It is, to use a word which says more than many sentences, lecherous. But how much is there not in it which causes us to pause and to think; which sometimes gently touches the heart-strings and which anon, when we have finished, makes us sorry that so many details of fine feeling have been wasted on an unsatisfactory entity?

The rock on which the book splits is the abject weakness of its hero, and the inherent vulgarity of the heroine. He, Jean, has no redeeming point at all. He is the sort of man who is like dough in the hands of any woman who understands the subtle art of kneading men's weaknesses. Up to a certain point he retains a claim on our sympathy, but when he meets Irene, has a grand chance of counterbalancing a life of laziness, corruption, and opprobrium, and yet returns to the woman who had convinced him of her contempt, we fling him aside as a fruit not speckled only, but rotten to the core. And when we see him leaving the shores of France to take up a Consular appointment somewhere in the Far East, the pang of sorrow which we feel is not for him; it is caused by the poet who knows how to describe the agony of bidding farewell to Mary Stuart's "Belle France."

As for Sapho, we cannot help feeling drawn to her because she is the victim of circumstances,—I should rather say of her birth. The kernel is good, but the surrounding flesh is so degenerate that she cannot rise to something better. Her instinct tells her at times that she is born for respectability of a certain class, but her birthright seems to hold her back, and to remind her at every moment that she is the daughter of the drink-sodden ne'er-do-well cabman. Yet this woman, light of love, with a past unfathomable, rises at one juncture to greatness. It is when the only man she loved, condemned for forgery, comes out of prison a wreck in body and in soul. Then she does not hesitate to leave the rich young lover and throw in her lot with the *débris* of the other man's life.

That is told by Daudet in beautiful simplicity, and if it had only been re-told by the adaptor, Adolf Belot, in the same pathetic manner, the play of "Sapho" would have justified its right to existence. As it now stands before us it is not a play at all. There are no inner links between the fragments of the story which lingers in the minds of those who have read the book. As I saw it the other day, I was vainly striving to disenfranchise my mind of those recollections, and I would have given much to have been able to judge the play with a mind unbiassed by my intimacy with the novel, for, naturally, I could supplement all that was wanting from my storehouse. But what must be the impression on the playgoer who knows nothing of the psychology of the characters, nothing of the motives guiding their actions, nothing beyond the spasmodic episodes forced from the book for the purpose of the play? I should say that the average man, notably the English playgoer, must feel horrified by the naked exposure of Parisian immorality as depicted in this play. The atmosphere is wholly of patchouli and of cocottes, and the sole occupation of every character concerned seems to be the veneration of Aphrodite, as if there were no other aim in life.

It would likewise be instructive to know what our average playgoer thinks of the Censor who considers the production of such a play harmless to our morals. I, for one, if discussion on the subject were not futile, would say that the play "Sapho" is a comprehensive and useful guide for the young as to "how to be happy though immoral." Yet bad as this play is in construction, in aim, and certainly in characterisation, it has a redeeming charm to which even aversion from the theme cannot blind one. It is the language. Belot may have mutilated the book. He may have been, with the consent of the author, an accessory to the destruction of that which purported to be a work of art. But being a man of letters himself, being a Frenchman, he could not annihilate that which is the priceless treasure of the Gallic nation. The form may have gone; the depth

may have gone; but one thing remains; style! and, through style, a certain charm which covers any amount of defects. The language is at times beautiful. It cannot fail to be beautiful, for the ear of a polished French writer is ever conscious of melody, and that constitutes, in my estimation, one of the main reasons why the French drama still holds its sway over the world.

II.

The greatest actress of modern times has come to act this play for us, for I fear no contradiction in so calling Réjane. She is certainly greater than Sarah Bernhardt, because she has more imagination, greater versatility, and because her art is more spontaneous. She is greater than Duse or Sorma, because hers is not only the art of sadness and pathos, it is also the art of gaiety. Réjane, to put it shortly, is not one-sided, she is not artificial, she is universal. When we see her in her effusions of love, we men feel that it is thus we would like to be caressed. When we see her in grief, as in the terrible scene of "Robe Rouge," we know that grief must be expressed with that pallor of countenance, that agony of voice. True, in her passion there is an undercurrent of vulgarity, the vulgarity of the "gamin" of Paris, that kaleidoscopic being, exuberant and uncontrollable in every sense. But we cannot reproach Réjane for that. Somehow that touch of lesser refinement belongs to her; she is a child of the people, she has lived from early youth in Bohemia, and from her blood the Bohemian touch is ineradicable. But let no one imagine that Réjane can never rise to absolute dignity. She has shown us that she can in the transformation of Sans-Genie the washerwoman into Sans-Genie the Marshal's wife, who becomes the foil of Napoleon. She has shown it again with greater intensity in that most beautiful play—neglected perhaps, but not forgotten—"Georgette Lemeunier," one of the finest essays on marital life in modern French literature. She shows it

in "Sapho" at intervals. Now she is the cocotte, now the woman lost in love, now the virago defending her reputation when wagging tongues are threatening its destruction—now she is the struggler for life in whom all baser feelings are extinguished in order to do that which is her duty, ruled by destiny. In all this Réjane was superb. I have heard others say that in this play of "Sapho," she, at times, did not seem to "touch ground," that the play appeared to weary her. I have not found it so. I found her at her greatest. Her accents of love, of passion, of hatred, ever spontaneous, linger like unforgettable echoes in my ear, and that, in particular, is why she is greater than Sarah Bernhardt. The tragedienne has no secrets from me; I realise from the beginning what she is going to do and how she is going to do it, but in Réjane we are always confronted by the unexpected. It is always a riddle what she will do next, and when it comes it springs upon us with the power of a surprise. Réjane, in fine, is an actress who has a power of governing. She is in a certain measure a ruler of men, for she controls our mirth as well as our sentiment. She gives herself so entirely that the tears frequently stream from her eyes. She forces us to capitulate in unconditional admiration.

I may be forgiven if my enthusiasm for this great artist has rendered me somewhat ungracious towards the company which surrounds her. The performance is one of all-round excellence, and M. Grand as Jean, Madame Viarny as the delightful Divonne, deserve a special mention. But Réjane is the play, and to sing her praises is to repay a debt of gratitude long since overdue.

REJANE—TRAGEDIENNE.

June 30, 1901.

I.

Paul Hervieu occupies a unique position in the French world of letters. As a novelist and as a dramatist he stands on a plane alone. He has learned his style from no one, and no one has, so far, confessed to be his disciple. He is in a certain measure an apostle of realism, but not of realism as we have become accustomed to understand it from Balzac and his successors. Hervieu, in endeavouring to transplant to book or stage life, as he sees it, concerns himself very little with sexual questions. What he studies in the main is the effect of several accepted conventions of life, on the existence of certain beings under given circumstances. In his famous novel, "L'Armature," he teaches with the sincerity of conviction, if not with complete success, that money is the dominant power of the world, that not everything only, but everybody has a price. In "Les Tenailles," the most cruel exposition of certain phases of married life, he demonstrates with the stern logic of a professor that the union of two people may become an indissoluble shackle, in spite of the belated relief which the Loi Naquet has afforded to marital sufferers in France. Now, in "La Course Du Flambeau," Hervieu tackles again with unabated vigour the money question, and without deviating into the byways of his play, I may explain that it purports to depict the tragedy of parents who have an all too foolish love for their children.

We have here the case of a woman who has a daughter of a marriageable age. That daughter wants to marry, and her choice has fallen on a young man of good society whose financial position, however, is rickety. In fact, if money does not come to the rescue, bankruptcy may be the sequel to the honeymoon. The mother, now in that period of life which the Frenchman gracefully calls "the return"—the age when the gold of auburn locks begins to be alloyed with silver—has just refused, for the sake of her child, an alliance which would bring solace to her widowed heart and comfort to her old age. Scarcely has she undergone this first sacrifice, when the daughter declares her determination to marry, and, what is more, money must be found to render the marriage possible. If Sabine Revel had been a sensible mother unswayed by sentimentality, and governed by that knowledge of life which would at any cost avert the danger of a jerry-built marriage; if Sabine, living in a country where the law authorises parents to forbid their children's marriages before they are thirty, had exercised her prerogative, she would have justified the sympathy which the author undoubtedly tries to claim for her. But she does not do that, she fosters the marriage—she would even quarrel with her own mother to feather the nest of the young couple; and when the union, otherwise happy, proves financially disastrous, she shrinks from nothing in order to save that which is dearest to her—her child. This mother, urged on the one hand by the tears of her daughter and the agonising pleadings of her son-in-law, and on the other hand by the supreme desire to find the wherewithal at any cost; this mother does not shrink from attempted forgery to obtain her own mother's money; and when that does not succeed, the idea even grows in her to acquire the money from which her aged parents will not part, by main force, almost by murder.

Finally, when the bride falls ill as the result of all her tribulations, Sabine, unable to bear the separation, drags her moribund mother to the Engadine, which the doctors had pronounced fatal to her shaken condition. And now

the dreadful thing happens. The very man who wanted Sabine to marry him, and who appears upon the scene to lend the financial help she asked for, offers to the son-in-law a position in America. Then regardless of all Sabine has done, regardless of desolation staring the poor broken woman in the face, the young wife very calmly prevails upon her husband to accept the offer and leave Sabine to her fate. Nor is this enough. What the doctors predicted happens; the old woman succumbs, after all these family troubles, to a paralytic stroke, and Sabine stands alone in the world with the terrible consciousness that "in order to save her child she has killed her mother."

This is the broad outline of the story; now what is its purpose? In a word it is simply this—do not expect gratitude in this world, even from those nearest to you. Go your own way, stick to your own money, do not sacrifice yourself even for your children, for when they ripen and the time comes, they will disregard all that they have done in the past, and, while ever ready to accept your benefits, they will not proffer an ounce of their happiness to safeguard yours. It is a hard theory, undoubtedly, but at least it is a modern one. The old idea was that parents, having brought children into the world, and repaid this responsibility by sparing nothing to educate them as useful members of society, would be entitled to their life-long consideration. The new theory is that children say: "We did not ask for life; you have given it to us without our consent. In educating us, you have merely obeyed conventions. When we grow up we do as we please." In fact, according to these modern men and women, parentage is an accident caused by law of nature, but not entailing any responsibility on the part of the younger generation. It is not for me, in dramatic criticism, to open a lengthy discussion on this subject; I have merely to gauge in how far the author has applied it to the play, and whether his development of the theme is consistent. I have already suggested above that the case is weakly stated and inconclusive, by the fact that Sabine is not a normal woman;

she comes under the category of the foolish women, the class of person who would fail in every phase of life, who would suffer shipwreck in almost every undertaking, because a weak heart overpowers a weaker head.

What Sabine would have done as a wise mother would be this: knowing the position of her future son-in-law, she would have explained to her daughter that there could not be any felicity in a union which spelt disaster from the first; she would have implored her to wait; she would have worked upon the feelings of the young man, who, apart from a certain snobbishness, evinced no lack of honour; she would have taken the girl away, travelled with her, done all that which one applies to the young of eighteen, when there is the certainty that they are not yet ripe to understand their own mind. On the other hand, I fear that the author has also caricatured the daughter. Such undisguised selfishness as is displayed by this girl is a rarity, and it goes once more against the weak mother, for it is the fruit of a bad education. For the young man little is to be said, for as depicted by Hervieu his nature is of the willowy kind, and entirely governed by the young woman who, I say designedly, marries him. The only character consistent from first to last is Sabine's mother, a woman of the old stamp, who says, "If we have duties towards ourselves and our children, we have also duties towards the generation that follows, and there is no reason to destroy the little patrimony left by my husband for the sake of the temporary relief of an embarrassed position." In other words, the old lady is far-seeing, and being left only moderately well off, she rightly refuses to give up the little she has before, by rights, its transfer should take place.

It has, I think, often been said of Hervieu that he is too emphatic in the statement of his cases. He strikes one as an iconoclast builder, and one who sees the majority of mankind from its weakest, not to say its seamiest side. Moreover, he is hard in style as he is hard in his judgment. His French is fine, but it is the icy beauty of the academic form. It does not carry; it does

not thrill ; it does not force to surrender. And as he is long-winded and slow in action, the play in itself would give but scant satisfaction if it were not sublimely acted. That with all its faults it is not commonplace, goes without saying, for Hervieu is a thinker ; he understands the character of his nation, he knows the tremendous power that money exercises on the marital question in France. But, it must be said, when one has sat out the lengthy four acts of this painful domestic catastrophe, one comes away with the oppressive feeling that one has listened to a philosophical discourse against which one one would fain have raised a long and loud protest.

II.

That factor which redeems " *La Course du Flambeau* " as a play (for as literature it requires no condonation) is the acting of Réjane, and, in no small measure, of Madame Daynes Grassot who played the old mother. In the great scene between the two women, when Sabine tries to urge on her mother the necessity of surrendering 100,000f. for the young menage, these two women stood out on the same peak of greatness. What Réjane gave with all the vehemence of an impassioned soul, Madame Grassot rendered with all dignity, the reflective maturity, the incisive logic of a world-wise woman. The calmness of the one formed a striking contrast to the agitated persuasiveness of the other, and of both it can be said that in that memorable scene, which is enough to make a play, they embodied two specimens of French womankind which could only be judged by those who are fully intimate with the inner working of Parisian family life. As for Réjane, of whom but last week I said that she always surprises us with the unexpected, it can only be reasserted that she showed herself in an entirely new aspect. Hitherto we have known Réjane as comédienne in the English, and comedienne in the French sense of the word. We have known Réjane as ingénue, as character actress, as a woman of the world, and as a woman in whom pathos and mirth

are wonderfully blended. To-day, after "La Course du Flambeau," she stands before us a tragedienne of the very first rank, for she has that unique gift which can be best described in the French expression, *cri du cœur*. She embodies the entire theory of tragedy. From the moment she appears on the stage, with suffering on her countenance, and something in her demeanour which betrays the battle of life, we feel that this woman is predestined to suffer—to suffer in such a manner that all her being is to be shaken to its foundations, that all her happiness is to be torn to shreds, and when gradually she grows entangled more deeply in the toils of fate, we follow her in breathless suspense. She uses no artifice, she does not rant, she does not rave across the stage. She simply gives herself; she teaches us how one could feel under her circumstances; and thus it comes to pass that her agony becomes our agony, her tears moisten our eyes, that the mountain of sorrow which threatens to crush her seems to entrain us also into the disaster. It may not be a comforting performance, it must needs send us away with an aching heart, and a mind disturbed by the cruelty of fate against some of our neighbours. But it is a performance of ineffaceable impressiveness, a creation that marks an epoch in the triumphant career of the greatest actress of modern times.

COMEDY THEATRE: "WHEN WE WERE TWENTY-ONE,"

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS. BY H. V. ESMOND.

September 8, 1901.

1.

FOR one so young the record of Mr. H. V. Esmond is long, and its length is duly proportioned to its respectability. The actor-author has already made a name, and, more than that, much of his work has impressed itself on our memory. "One Summer's Day," "Grierson's Way," latterly "The Wilderness"—they are all works of some fulfilment and more promise. And now comes this new play, in which the author deepens our conviction (and justifies our prophesy) that in the near future he will rank among the best, and form a quartette with Pinero, Jones, and Carton.

Again, as in "The Wilderness," the conquering quality of "When We were Twenty-One" is charm—charm of conception, of minor touches, of amiable parlance. But wedded to this prepossessing endowment there is something which has a more durable value, and is more important for the future of the author than a mere gift of nature. In this new comedy Mr. Esmond proves, saving for one flagrant exception, about which more anon, that he has become an acute observer of life, without losing any of the graces of the agreeable "flaneur" in the realm of fiction. He has developed a leaning towards realism.

Mild realism if you like, realism of gossamer instead of Zola ; realism of an optimistic kind, in fine ; still, the sort of thing which exhales the warm breath of life, instead of the stale odour of the stage-canvas. I will but cite the scene at the card table in the first act, round which the four foster-fathers of the twenty-one-year-old juvenile lay their plans for his future, while bewailing the days which preceded their forties. A more life-like, a saner, a more untheatrical scene I have not beheld for a long time. I know that scene : it comes from Bachelorland, when the clock strikes two, and cards-cum-weed-and-whisky lead to the construction of picturesque aerial castles. And of such touches the play is full, at least during the first two and last acts, for in the third there is derailment, and, if there are no *débris*, it is because the human interest of the story remains unspoilt.

II.

"When We were Twenty-One," says the title ; and the author might have added "when we are forty," for the play deals no less with the days of mature manhood than with the tempestuous seventh heaven of early virility. When we were twenty-one some of us, like Richard Audaine, the orphan adopted by four bachelor musketeers, lost head and heart over beauties flaming on posters and in the glamour of Abyssinian golden locks. When we are forty some of us, in fear that we have rushed "past the junction" (as the Germans call it in metaphorical railway language), are so bashful that we no longer know our own heart, and tap around in blindness, although fair woman's love may shadow us at every step. Whether we are all so foolish at twenty-one as to offer wedlock to an artiste (with an "e") who is all men's land, and so absolutely unselfish at forty as to sacrifice our savings, self-respect, and, perhaps, our reputation, to quench the flame that ignited a youthful firebrand, is open to discussion. Mr. Esmond evidently believes in the possibility of the thing, and to a certain extent he defends the position well enough. His one error

is that, for the benefit of the cause—this cause being the commercial value of the play—he deems it necessary to illustrate in a bad act that which could be more effectively told in trenchant narrative. For really the scene in the night club, where Dick Carewe tries to save Richard Audaine from the clutches of the music-hall lady branded as the “firefly,” is entirely superfluous. It is in sad taste. It is garbage belonging to vile melodrama. And, beyond all, it is false—as disagreeably false as the lurid wig and over-acting of Miss Constance Collier. Probably Mr. Esmond has never been in a night-club. So much the better for him. But, as one who knows his London, I can tell him that the scene which he describes exceeds in unpleasantness anything that is conceivable in the unlicensed licentious clubs of London, whether their name be Athenian, Corinthian, or Alsatian. The possible plea of ignorance is no excuse for such an exhibition, and the obvious intention of creating by it the culminating point of the play aggravates the error of taste. A man of imagination, of refinement, of intellectual powers like Mr. Esmond should scorn these practices, which debase the adepts of the commercial drama as deeply as the commerce of the drama itself. Moreover, America has already condemned this futile act. Why, then, bring it to London? Why spoil a lovely picture with a smirch of mud? This play, I assure Mr. Esmond, would draw the crowd without introduction of base alloy. Aye, I am not at all sure that the night-club scene will not rather mar than make the play. It is not even piquant. It is common. I feel strongly on this point, for some fools assert that the “new school” is responsible for the introduction of this kind of thing. Nothing is more libellous. The “new school” sees life; it does not distort it. This scene is neither inspired by the Northern, by the Teutonic, nor yet by the Theatre Libre school. It is a lineal descendant of “Pink Dominoes” and other pink and blue stuff for pale-brained people.

III.

Fortunately the fourth act brings atonement. Esmond is true to himself once more. The play is itself again. The dénouement is as tender as it is lovable, and here the author reveals his power of observation. The explanation between Richard and his foster-father, the youthful petulance, the high words, the arm ready to strike, then bent by thoughts of gratitude, the calm demeanour of the misjudged man of forty—that is drama of splendid, healthful fibre. And the love-scene—the moment when the man of forty awakes and, rejuvenated by woman's tender eyes, casts off the burden of years and in jubilation sings the hallelujahs of love and youth and happiness—that love-scene is the incarnation of all that is gentle and beautiful in the sound manhood of a virile nation. Here is evidence that our drama can reach a high-water mark of simple, heartfelt sentiment, and it would be well if the stage abroad could learn by a translation of this play how one of our younger men knows how to handle the subject which is dear to all "*cœurs bien nés*."

If Esmond was fortunate when his wife rendered "*The Wilderness*" unforgettable, he has been no less well served by the American friends who defended "*When We were Twenty-One*." Oh! these American actors, these foreigners whom nobody dares to call so because it is good policy to claim kinship with a formidable rival, how dangerous they become to native talent! If the mixture of nations is not always an unmixed blessing, from the histrionic point of view it has worked wonders. The essence of the English, the French, the German, the Dutch blood, has produced a race in which the dramatic gift is wonderfully developed. If the Latin peoples are actors born, the American nation is one of actors by inoculation. Every new company brings revelations, and every renewed acquaintance brings evidence of development. We remember Nat Goodwin in the "*Gold Mine*," when he saved a mediocre play by one touch of pathos, and each time he has come back he has shown something new, some refinement of his art, some widening

of his horizon. His Dick Carewe was wholly admirable. I thought of Gustave Droz' little masterpiece, "Tristesses et Sourires." Nat Goodwin is a master of sobs and smiles. And Maxine Elliott, his wife, more beautiful by the grace of nature than talented by the favour of the Muse, has also made great strides during the past year. True, the part of the young girl was, perhaps, more suited to Gertrude than to Maxine Elliott; but the latter has gained some of her sister's winsomeness of manner; she has rendered her voice more flexible. From "a statue out in the east wind" she has become an actress with some emotion, in that which she gives and the promise of more to come. She rose to her husband in that exquisite love-scene of the last act. But perhaps the conquering hero of the evening was young Mr. Arnold Daly—"twenty-one." Now here was delicate ground beset with traps and pitfalls. He had to be young, frivolous, boisterous; he had to simulate intoxication, frenzy, ungovernable irresponsibility—all things which are within an ace of the sublimely ridiculous. Yet Mr. Daly never failed. We did not laugh at him. We felt for him. He re-read us a few chapters of our own life-books. He was youth in all its glory, all its folly—a beautiful performance rewarded with generous recognition. Another splendid creation was the Colonel of Mr. J. R. Crauford—an Englishman this time. His nick-name was the "soldier-man," and that he was from top to toe; from appearance to expression; from manner to mannerism.

ROYAL COURT THEATRE: "JOHN
DURNFORD, M.P.,"

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS BY STUART OGILVIE.

September 8, 1901.

I.

It is a deep-rooted fallacy to believe that the mere possession of eggs warrants a decent omelette. The position is by no means so simple as that, for the savour of the omelette depends very much on the quality of the eggs and on the cook's familiarity with the technique of the frying-pan.

I am sorry to drag in the ancient culinary hobby-horse, but for once it will serve admirably. Now Mr. Ogilvie, when he settled down to write this play, had the eggs which stand for ideas—he always has them, for he is no flippant worker. And if some of them were shop 'uns, and yet others addled enough to serve for electioneering purposes, there were a few as fresh, as luscious in yolk, as the best new-laid that ever came to market. But as regards the frying-pan, well, I am sorry to say Mr. Ogilvie is no expert at all. Indeed I fear that he never will be one, for, whether you concoct omelettes or plays, you must have the instinct of the thing, you must know the twist and the turn, know when to kindle the fire and when to rake the grate, know, in fine, the elements of the craft, without which the art is unprofitable.

The good ideas—the new-laid eggs—in "John Durn-

ford, M.P.," were, first, the notion of bringing into conflict two rival leaders of politics—the one staunch as Sheffield steel; the other as frail in certain respects as the late Mr. Adam—with the piquant detail of the gay lord being well on the way to tempt his rival's married daughter. Second, the more pathetic conflict, in which honest John—a free man, yet a slave, because his wife is under restraint—meets a lovable woman, who would be his true mate and a comfort in his work for the democratic cause. Both these departures are full of possibilities; they open up a broad view of novel development, for, since "The Candidate," we have yearned in vain for a good play of political life, and the problem of marriage wrecked but not nullified through lunacy has scarcely ever been adequately handled on the stage.

But these good ideas run to waste, because the author does not hold them firmly in his grasp, and, instead of forging onward in a natural course, uses obsolete means ("shop 'uns") wherewith to stuff his action. Thus we encounter the purist M.P. bent on exposing his colleagues less solidly shod with rigid morals than himself—a mere flat reminiscence of H. A. Jones's "Triumph of the Philistines." Thus we meet once more in the roadside inn, where would-be respondents and co-respondents toy at a *tête-a-tête* dinner with forbidden fruit, although, fortunately, as Mr. Ogilvie's wayward lady puts it, "There is a good dinner but no dessert." This again is borrowed from Mr. Jones. Remember "The Liars!" And so I might continue to dissect the play in detail, if more ample proof were needed. But you know what mean, and it is sufficient to add that all these incidents, stale and new, are jumbled together in such a fashion that comprehension becomes difficult. The omelette leaves the pan in a formless mass, tasty in parts, leathery or cindered in others. No wonder that the public at the end did not know what to do, and returned a verdict of silence, tantamount to: "The jury, in spite of being locked up for three hours, failed to agree."

This negative result is all the more regrettable since

Mr. Ogilvie's earnestness and laudable efforts are worthy of a better cause. He can write a good, warm-blooded scene—there is no mistake about that; and the first act wound up with a pretty incident of feeling, the forerunner of a love-scene (between John and the lady he admired) which never came off. He can also write such good and such pointed dialogue that I feel sure the play must be good reading. But it acts badly, is overloaded, is clumsily wrought as by a novice's hand, and all the good material is spoiled by contact with rusty, obsolete, and useless ingredients. The conclusion is obvious. Mr. Stuart Ogilvie wants a collaborator—a skilled craftsman of youthful ideas—who can work out in detail the plans which the author of "John Durnford, M.P.," traces well enough in broad outlines.

LYCEUM: "SHERLOCK HOLMES,"

A DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS, BY A CONAN DOYLE AND WILLIAM
GILLETTE.

September 15, 1901.

I.

Poor old London is a city in disgrace. Mr. William Gillette has censured its public from the boards of the Lyceum, because there was no desire to hear an actorial speech in addition to a bad play. We all felt very much abashed and afraid. Heaven knows what will happen next! Perhaps a manager will publicly distribute good and bad marks to his hearers. That will be a black day for certain dramatic critics who shall be nameless. But come what may, it must be said that our guest made a grave mistake in haranguing the crowd when there was nothing to say. There are occasions when all bi-metallic considerations are futile, and common sense dictates unreserved adhesion to the golden rule of silence. The production of "Sherlock Holmes" was such an occasion. To see the Lyceum degraded to melodrama of crime is sad enough; but to have to sit out in that famous play-house a concoction which falls below the low level of the transpotine is something more than sad. It is positively disheartening to feel in how poor an estimation some people hold the intelligence of the London playgoer. For here is a play that has not even skilful workmanship to recommend, nor yet thrilling situations to redeem it. It

is a penny dreadful minus the coherence which is to be found in even that very cheap product of scribblership. And I decline to believe that Dr. Doyle, the author of a series of delightful romances, the creator of "Sherlock Holmes" of volume fame, had anything to do with the destruction of his work for stage purposes. No; the actor—the star—has been at work here to provide a vehicle for his virtuoso-gifts. And, in order to achieve this purpose, one of the "Sherlock Holmes" episodes had to be rent to tatters, and most of the tatters had to be dipped in all kinds of colours in order to enhance the lurid hue of the central figure. The result is a patchwork of sensations, mostly unexciting, a thorough incomprehensibility all round, so that only the reader of the work may perhaps grope his way in the dark, and a crudity of form and language belonging to a period when our stage was less "advanced" than it is now.

"Sherlock Holmes" thus belongs to the worst kind of all—to the kind which bores; and even the most be-paragraphed gas-chamber scene, wherein Holmes deceives his pursuers by planting his burning cigar in a crevice of the wall, fails to curdle our blood or to harrow our minds, because it is merely sleight-of-hand and not drama. Even in a less unpalatable world than that of good melodrama, Mr. Holmes would have been a dead man long before he could have done his cigar trick. For it was a case of five men to one, to say nothing of a gas-explosion.

II.

But perhaps Mr. Gillette has been "guying" us all the time. Perhaps this "Sherlock Holmes" episode is not to be considered as drama at all, but merely as conjuring business. In fact, the valse played between acts one and two is a favourite melody of the cunning gentlemen who have nothing up their sleeves and no double bottoms in their cabinets. It is possible that Mr. Gillette wanted to show how neatly the craftiness of Carl Hertz and Servais le Roi can be adapted to the drama. He reminds me of

the prestidigitator who borrows a hat and a watch, obtains leave to do with either what he likes, and then divides our attention between both. The watch is stamped to pieces and then found safe round the neck of a guinea-pig in the coat pocket of a spectator; the hat produces all sorts of wonderful surprises, from birdcages to flowing cups alive with goldfish. While the tricks go on the conjurer talks all the time, eludes and deludes his public, springs mild sensations on unsuspecting spectators, and generally keeps attention so well going that no one cares to discover the venerable age of his devices.

Viewed from this standpoint, which reminds one of a certain melodrama written for the sole purpose of exhibiting in every act the talent of a gifted violoncellist, the "Sherlock Holmes" play is a highly original affair. You never saw such a wonderful man as the detective, his eyes pierce walls, see the grass growing, he hears the worms crawling beneath the surface of the earth, he reads thoughts past, present, and future, he is ever on the spot, and at the very moment when he seems "done," he cries victory all along the line. It is the acme of conjuring and juggling, and, condensed into a sketch of say forty-five minutes, the thing should create furore at the Canterbury, or the Paragon in the Mile End-road. But although there was some rumour to that effect some time ago—I am not aware that the Lyceum, Limited, has been turned into a temple of varieties—as yet; otherwise I would gladly withdraw my strictures on the "drama," and treat it with the indulgence due to a music hall "turn."

III.

Mr. William Gillette is a splendid actor. We have seen him in "Secret Service" and in "Too Much Johnson," and everyone has given him the praise due to a talent of rare versatility. As Sherlock Holmes he is less happy, simply because the character allows of no grip. The attempt to enact a part which is all incident and contains not an atom of concrete inwardness, is like trying to play

ball with bubbles. The thing is beyond the power of man. Still, Mr. Gillette with his remarkably pointed delivery, his striking countenance and presence, his innate sense of humour, now and again infused a little vitality into the paste-board figure of the famous detective. Sometimes he flagged and spoke his lines in undertones and monotony, which provoked gallery-protest. But on the whole he carried the part through with the assurance and the volubility of a dexterous conjurer bent on bewildering the audience at all cost. The performance will confirm Mr. Gillette's reputation as an actor of great resources, but I fear that at best his fame as an artist will remain unimpaired by his thankless experiment.

SHAFTESBURY THEATRE: "ARE YOU A
MASON?"

A FARCE IN THREE ACTS FROM THE GERMAN OF LAUFS AND
KRAATS

September 15, 1901.

Indeed I am! although not a mason in the sense indicated by Messrs. Laufs and Kraatz. For later when the title of the play has spread across the town like a popular air from a musical comedy, the question "Are you a Mason?" is likely to take the place of the ancient, less polite, but more direct, "You are a lamb dyer!" Masonry in this delectable farce is nothing more than a cloak, which, besides other sins, covers a multitude of domestic prevarications—on the husband's part, of course. The idea of bringing forward all-night sittings at the lodge as an excuse for dubious absences from home, hearth, and the marital couch, is so ingenious that it seems almost a pity to give it away to the masses. It is one of the few "fibs" left that have a chance of coming out well in the dreaded wash of connubial cross-examination, for our world of masonry is still shrouded in a veil of mystery, and woman fair, who is not curious but likes to know everything, never tires of scrutinising that forbidden land.

But Laufs and Kraatz are two sappers who respect nothing. They laugh at masonry, at domestic virtues, at mothers-in-law, at everything that is open to caricature; and they make such a wondrous hash of all the ingre-

dients known in the witches' kitchen of farce, that we have no time to examine—we must laugh without rhyme or reason. And in this whirl of wild imagination, in which "Charley's Aunt" is out-heroded by the appearance of Mr. Paul Arthur as a petticoated skeleton ex cupboard, to remind an old sinner of wild oats' harvesting, the strangest thing of all is that our merriments increases, while the plot itself deteriorates. For half-way through our authors let the cat out of the bag that all these would-be Masons were gay frauds, and then they tacked on to the exhausted plot, one, two, three new episodes, which had as little to do with the case as the famous flowers that bloom in the spring. In nine cases out of ten such recklessness would have harmed the play and led to a third act of traditional tameness. That this is not the case in "Are You a Mason?" proves conclusively that, in comical plays at least, the importance of the central idea is a paramount factor of success. We would not have cared a jot for this play, with its commonplace tissue of lies, loopholes, and love-affairs, if the motive of it all had not been a novel, a quaint, a happy thought. But Masonry has as much attraction for the crowd as the stage-door for gilded youth, and the hands of two jolly fellows like Laufs and Kraatz—born farce-writers, who understand the touch and go of their craft—have built a frolic around it which should vie with "Charley's Aunt."

The adaptor, unnamed—I believe it is the American actor, Mr. Dietrichstein—deserves a fair share of our thanks for an evening of boundless and irrepressible gaiety, and so do the actors. The heart and soul of the whole business were Mr. George Giddens and Mr. Paul Arthur. The former was inimitable as an old and amiable sinner with a heart of gold and a boyish mind. Mr. Giddens is the personification of the milk of human kindness, and his quiet, spontaneous humour fills the stage with cosiness. As for Mr. Paul Arthur, he achieved that most difficult thing, to be excruciatingly funny (and by no means clumsy) without being vulgar, although he had to masquerade as a woman. Other ludicrous, but irrelevant,

parts were in the safe and competent hands of Messrs. W. H. Day and Mark Kinghorn. Amongst the ladies, all somewhat step-motherly dowered with characteristic features by the authors, Miss Marie Illington and Miss Agnes Miller stood in the front rank. Miss Miller had a difficult little love-scene in the third act, and played it for all it was worth with a touch of originality and unfeigned sincerity, and Miss Illington was highly diverting as a stern, imperious mother-in-law, in whose eloquent curve of the lip one constantly read a piquant derision of a would-be serious situation.

“THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST.”

December 8, 1901.

I.

A dead man's voice has been heard again, and as we listened to it the artist himself once more stood before us. Forgotten was the history of the man, forgotten the past. The hands of the clock had moved for seven years, but the situation remained unchanged. Oscar Wilde has come to life again, and on the night of December 2, when literary and social London foregathered at the reproduction of “The Importance of Being Earnest,” there was celebrated a feast of absolution, and, to a certain extent, of rehabilitation. In the midst of our intellectual joy there sounded but two discordant notes—the one of anger, the other of sadness. It made some of us angry to read on the programme “‘The Importance of Being Earnest,’ by the author of ‘Lady Windermere’s Fan,’” whereby was indicated that, though it was good to use the artist’s work, his name was not sufficiently honourable to be given out to the public. I know full well that the publisher has erred in this direction, as well as the manager, but there is no excuse for either. The note of sadness was that so great a mind as Oscar Wilde’s had prematurely come to a standstill; that matters independent of art had bereft us of the most brilliant wit of the period, and that subsequent events, instead of leading to regeneration, brought a broken career to an untimely termination.

II.

In 1895, when "The Importance of Being Earnest" saw the light at the St. James's Theatre, it was voted a perfect farce, and, but for the catastrophe, it would have been played for centuries of evenings. I recall this not merely as a chronological fact, but more particularly in order to emphasise the exceeding cleverness of the play, since the duality of its fibre escaped most of the critics, and certainly the majority of the public. The practised eye discovered at once that the first and second acts and the third act were not of the same mould. They made the impression of wines of different vintages served in the same glasses. Those two acts—perfect, not only as farce, but as comedy, too, for they reflect the manners of the period, and are richly underlaid with humorous current—were written in days when the poet basked in the hot sun of popularity, when his every saying darted like an arrow through the land, when the whole of the English speaking world echoed sallies which, though they were not always Oscar Wilde's, were as *ben trovato* as if they had been his. The third act was—I know it authoritatively—composed under stress of circumstances, when the web was tightening round the man, and menaces of exposure must have rendered his gaiety forced, like that of a being condemned to the stocks. Under pressure a lofty mind often does excellent work, and it is undeniable that in the third act of "The Importance of Being Earnest" there is more cleverness than in one round dozen English comedies *en bloc*. There are epigrams in it for the paternity of which some people would give a few years of their lives, and as a solution to a tangle well-nigh inextricable it is by no means unhappy. Yet it is not of the same quality as those other two acts, in which the real, the probable, and the impossible form a *ménage à trois* of rare felicity. And as we listen to the play, what strikes us most of all is not so much the utterances of a mind which could not fail to be brilliant, but the prospect that this comedy—for I prefer to call it a comedy—will enjoy a kind of perennial youth somewhat

akin to Congreve's work or that of Sheridan. It is a bold thing to say, I know, but if there is exaggeration, let it pass, for the sake of the argument that when the artist's working powers were shut off he had not yet thoroughly felt his feet, but was only just beginning to plough his furrow in a new field. "The Importance of Being Earnest" ranks high, not only on account of its gaiety—a gaiety which in many produces the smile of intimate understanding, and in the less *blasé* guffaws straight from a happy mood—but because it satirises vividly, pointedly, yet not unkindly, the mannerisms and foibles of a society which is constantly before the public eye. I need not dive into details, for the plot is, or ought to be, known to every lover of the Theatre. And I do not quote epigrams, for it is but a poor glory to feather one's own cap with another man's cleverness. Anon, when the play is revived at the St. James Theatre, when the book of an author whose name one need no longer express with bated breath, is sold by the thousand, there will be ample opportunity to refresh one's memory, and spend a joyful hour with "The Importance of Being Earnest."

III.

Some time ago, in an American criticism on the performance of a serious play, I read: "This being drama, of course it was competently interpreted by the actors." There lies a great deal in this little sentence. It implies that it is much easier to act well in serious plays than in comedies or farces, where definite characterisation and lightening repartee are half the battle.

Now we complain, not wrongly I think, that not only is the art of comedy-writing pretty well extinct at the present moment, but also that comedy-acting lacks verve and vitality. Comedians are scarce, and as a consequence of this our managers are, willy nilly, compelled to fix the comic mask on those who by nature belong to the tragic muse. Sometimes the experiment succeeds beyond expectation, and this was the case when "The Importance of

Being Earnest" was revived. Mr. Alexander is not a comic actor. Miss Margaret Halston was designed by nature for the great classical repertoire, although her gift of humour has asserted itself powerfully in "The Man of Destiny." The amiable Miss Braithwaite is not a comedienne, nor would Mr. Grahame Browne be flattered if I classified him among our comedy, instead of our serious, lights. Still, the miracle happened. For the nonce everybody turned his coat. Mr. Alexander forgot his "Idlers" and his "Wilderness." Mr. Grahame Browne severed all connection with "Peril," and Miss Lilian Braithwaite developed a most delightful kind of sly humour, which, without compliment to the fair sex, is commonly called feline. Mr. Alexander's performance I rank high, because, coupled with almost boisterous hilarity, there was in his acting that refinement of a man of the world which composed a blend which would have delighted the departed author. On the same high plane with Mr. Alexander stood Miss Margaret Halston, whose mock-pathetic scene in the first act was so funny and effective as to bear comparison with the best comedy-acting in Paris.

THE TRUTH ABOUT HAUPTMANN'S LATEST PLAY.

December 15, 1901

I.

Last week, on a flying trip to Germany, the first thing I did in a few hours of leisure was to pay a visit to the Deutsche Theater, where Hauptmann's latest play, "Der Rothe Hahn" ("The Red Cock")—symbol of incendiarism—was running, and said to be a fiasco. Before going I had read the criticisms, and my mind was as richly saturated with prejudice as it could well be in the case of a man who always admires the master mind even when it deviates from the road of success. Such abuse, such merciless running down of a new play, I had not read for a long time, and my own conclusion was that the play must indeed be very bad, or, as is sometimes the case, the victim of the war which ever rages between the partisans of Hauptmann and Sudermann. For this you must know, at the Deutsche Theater the first night is not merely a trial of art; it is in a sense a battle of the two literary roses which now blossom foremost on the tree of Germany's literature. The cry is, "Hi! Hauptmann; hi! Sudermann." Quarter is not given; human feeling for the man on trial is stifled for the moment; sense of appreciation is dulled, as it always is when the passion of policy runs away with our sense of equity. Sometimes the mightier party succumbs to the might of the mightier talent, and the hisses are drowned in a cannonade of applause.

But frequently the work of the destroyer is so well engineered that fall is certain, and resurrection, on the face of it, improbable. Yet to both Hauptmann and Sudermann, in days gone by, have the agonies of first-night persecution been made up in ultimate success. This happened in the case of "Johannesfeuer," which was damned last year, and is now triumphantly flitting across all German lands; it happened some nine years ago in the case of "The Beaver Fur" (Biberpelz), of which "Der Rothe Hahn" is the sequel. That satire, which angered Berlin, was promptly ostracised, but is now looked upon as a kind of classic of the modern school of humour. And although I am no prophet, I predict that the fate of the new play will in some ways be similar to that of its predecessor. It will never rank high as a classic; it will, perhaps, in years to come be forgotten, because Hauptmann will have done better work. But one thing is certain—the fiasco of yesterday is already overcome, and to-day, now that the fever has subsided, the unprejudiced playgoers of Berlin begin to feel that they have been misled by Press and partisans.

II.

Sequels of plays like morrows of love affairs, are often sorely disappointing, and it was a bold and dangerous thing for Hauptmann to do when he embroidered the thin pattern of his "Beaver-Fur" with a new story having practically the same personages, the same locality, the same situations under scarcely altered circumstances. All that had happened in the interval since Mother Wolff stole that Beaver-Fur and was praised for it by the ridiculous magistrate, instead of being brought to book, was that her cipher of a first husband had departed this life, and a second cipher—even a greater zero—had taken his place. Since Mother Wolff had been so successful in her first predatory exploit, her ambition had grown by leaps and bounds, and her latest idea was to convert—by her policy of insurance—the old shanty of a house in which they lived, into a new and palatial building. It was a daring

deed to plan, for the law of Germany is not tender towards arson, and although the same asinine magistrate of Beaver-Fur fame was sitting on the bench, there was the distant probability that for once in his life even his blinded eyes would be freed from the scales. However, Mother Wolff was a woman of resource, and she took advantage of the presence of a village yokel, misshapen and weak of mind, to make him a catspaw in the execution of her sinister scheme. She does this, not very skilfully, it must be confessed, and the second act—the one great blot on the play—is neither clever nor worthy of Hauptmann; it is sheer *opéra bouffe*, this mistaken act, which I would cut out, were it not my principle to leave the master's work untampered with. Well, Mother Wolff manages to conjure some sulphurated wool into the idiot's coat pocket, and when the "red cock" sits triumphant on the old shanty, it is certain enough that the real culprit will, at least for the time being, escape. Then comes the magistrate's inquiry and at once Hauptman rises again to the height of detail painting, and a satire full of humour. The magistrate sits in judgment again, he makes inquiries, he interrogates, he makes speeches on virtue, and policy, and Prussia, and the King, and the duties of the citizens; he takes Mother Wolff—his old friend—into his confidence, and asks this virtuous woman her opinion on the case. He snubs everybody all round who does not kneel in the dust to him, and generally completes the picture of ridicule whereby Hauptmann meant and means to kill the "Great Unpaid."

Then the Force—a heavy posse for so poor a prisoner—brings in the idiot with the convicting proofs in their hands. The poor father, once a policeman himself, now a pensioner on the road slippery with alcohol, suddenly becomes a regenerate being. The absolute certainty that his son is innocent makes a better man of him, rouses his best feelings, and makes him a pleader of singular force. He almost succeeds in establishing an alibi, aye, and at a certain moment it looks as if the scales were dangerously lifting towards Mother Wolff, for her zero

of a husband puts, as one vulgarly says, his foot into it each time he opens his mouth, and it requires all the brazenness of the hardened female criminal to face the ordeal. Still, so dense is the magistrate that the smooth tongue of the woman once more conquers, and the poor boy is taken to gaol. But now that Justice which is beyond the control of man lays its hand on Mother Wolff. Directly she has nothing to fear—although all round are whispers, and sayings, and cackle, which indicate clearly enough that she is suspected; although she has received her insurance money, she has built her house, and apparently the judicial inquiry has led to no result whatever—inside the worm of conscience begins to gnaw. The fine buxom woman of yesterday is wasting; the new house and the surroundings—gorgeous for their station of life—afford her no pleasure. There is something wrong with her heart, and the waves of suspicion which are constantly lapping against her four walls, transform her palpitation into a very hammering. And louder and louder clamours her conscience, and tighter and yet more tight the net of suspicion gathers around her. She cannot bear the idea that one imbecile, innocent and young, should suffer, and when she learns that the Public Prosecutor has obtained certain evidence which will compel him to reopen the case she has done struggling. Gradually the active body becomes inert; gradually the tongue, ever glib and in perpetual motion, loses its power; gradually comes repentance, and in its wake follows the icy touch of death. She makes signs with her arms that we in life are grasping and grasping, and when our desire is gained for better or for worse . . . the author does not let her finish the sentence—she falls back. “She sleeps,” says the daughter. “She sleeps,” says the doctor. “But did she not speak just now?” queries the daughter. “Yes perhaps she did, but now she will be silent for ever.”

This is the end of Hauptmann’s latest drama—a play obviously written in a vein of satire—but a play which has an under-current of deeper meaning, for in Mother Wolff, Hauptmann has created a perfect type of criminal

in whom all the good instincts are extinguished by the demon of desire. Under other circumstances of life Mother Wolff would have been a good *bourgeoise*. She was a practical woman, a woman of brains, a woman of great possibilities; but she stood above her surroundings, she saw the stupidity, the cupidity, and the irresponsibility of everybody with whom she came in contact, and this determined her to take advantage of them all, and, whilst living in the odour of sanctity, to reap the benefit of her criminal intellectuality. She is withal a great picture on a small canvas: she is the only live figure in a little world obviously created for a satire, and this is why the play as a whole must make a somewhat incongruous impression. Yet with all its faults, Hauptmann reveals in "Der Rothe Hahn" how great a master of miniature painting he is. He reminds me forcibly of the old Dutch geniuses who distributed light and shade with such colours as have remained the wonder of all time. There are episodes in "Der Rothe Hahn" which Frans Hals would have loved to paint, if he had lived in our times. Hauptmann undoubtedly possesses the unique gift of transplanting the life of the lower classes on to the stage without great efforts of dialogue and characterisation. His character seems to develop in the flow of his pen. And when, later at our own German Theatre we produce his latest play, I feel confident that the work by our actors will not prove to be love's labour lost.

THE TRANCE OF HUMOUR.

December 22, 1901.

I.

We in England complain that the most precious jewel in the treasury of humour—comedy—is dead. Farce is plentiful, but between farce and comedy there is just as great a difference as between the clown at the circus and a refined society entertainer of the type of the late Corney Grain. The one, by his wild improbabilities, calls forth the thunderous guffaw of the man in the street; the other only hits off the manner and mannerisms of society, and produces within the hearer that sense of well-being which is translated by a smile or a melodious trill of laughter.

Now the question is: Does England in this respect stand in splendid isolation? Has the water which surrounds our isles all of a sudden established a fatal girdle against the entrance of that humour which in former days—we need not go quite so far as Sheridan, but may well stop in the seventies, when Tom Robertson and Henry J. Byron were flourishing—was not lacking; or are we for once in perfect harmony with our neighbours across the channel?

I have established of my own accord a little *enquête* on the subject. I have seen, written to, and read all the principal authors who nowadays are supposed to be the kings of dramatic literature in continental Europe; and the talk, and the letters, and the arduous perusal of countless works, partly in MSS., partly in print, have convinced

me that the world at large is in dire poverty of comedy; and when I come to think of what has been said by the leading managers in Berlin, in Paris, and in Vienna, I can but augur that, if to-morrow a man arises who has it in him to make absolute the decree *nisi* between comedy and farce, and to create comedy proper, there will be great glory in store for him, to say nothing of the gold of which crowns are usually made.

We over here, perhaps by the very fact that as one of our light operas has it—if we cannot get the master we are contented with the man, have somewhat lost our sense of realising what comedy is. We have accepted the authority of the playbill, which is as patient as most other paper, that certain farces have the right to plume themselves on being comedy. It is not necessary for the purpose of my argument to enter into a lengthy discussion of such pretensions, for to the student of the drama they are as clear as is the ridiculous custom which dubs the autumnal Drury Lane production a play of modern life. It is far more interesting to investigate whence it comes that nowadays refined humour is at a colossal premium, whilst the inanity which pleases the vulgar is at such a discount that it tempts one to quote the proverbial pound of tea.

II.

To arrive at a true diagnosis we have to hark back a little way. Twenty years ago, in the days which we then would have termed youth—the days of the twenty summers, which in our time already produce old-young men—I fancy we were less advanced than nowadays, because we all agree that the world was then singularly fertile in the production of the highest form of comic drama, while the serious muse was somewhat neglected. France, always in the front van of dramatic production, had her Labiche, Gondinet, Meilhac, and Halevy; in Germany Benedix, Rosen, and Moser gave a series of pictures of middle-class life, all humorous, which we found vastly delectable, and since naturalism and realism were

not yet invented, though they were already discovered, seemed to portray a little world in a life-like manner. In England Tom Robertson was not yet scoffed at; James Albery's "Two Roses" was held up as a model, and Mr. Pinero had not exchanged his amiable good humour for the more tragic toga of the dramatic educationalist.

Then towards the close of the eighties the great tidal wave of the new movement burst upon the Teutonic and Latin races of Europe. Its fountain head was in Scandinavia, but Scandinavia was literally at that time a new world undiscovered. Openly it originated simultaneously in France, Germany, and Holland. In the last-named country I was an interested spectator of the new current, and although I never was, nor ever will be a partisan or disciple, I was in almost daily touch with those who were the banner-men of the new form of literary expression, and since have made for themselves a name in the world. Later on, when in the wake of Antoine the Independent Theatre was founded in London, I had frequent intercourse with the men who are now great but were then beginners, and who soon swept the literary world of those countries from corner to corner. What was my main impression in that strange battle of which I was an impartial witness? I found that these men, these leaders and those led, none of whom had passed the boundaries of adolescence, were sad men for their age, and viewed life as a tragedy.

You have but to examine the dramatic literature of France and Germany of the last twelve to fifteen years to arrive at the conclusion that in the young generation gaiety was almost non-existent. The whole literature of that period has not produced a single comedy akin to Pailleron's "Le Monde ou l'on s'ennuie," and in Germany Hauptmann's "Biberpelz" almost stands alone as a high class yet not undisputed specimen of what a comedy should be. England I might almost leave entirely out of the question, and were it not for Oscar Wilde's "Importance of Being Earnest," Carton's "Lord and Lady Algy," and Anstey's insufficiently appreciated "The Man from Blankley's," it would have no claim at all to rank in the

series. England, like America, is prolific in farce—always has been, but the language of comedy has grown foreign to nearly all its authors.

The next point to study is : whence this premature old-mindedness of the young ? Why has the seventh heaven in which youth should mostly live given way to the conviction that the world is but a vale of tears ? I believe I have arrived at the solution. In former days when there was not so much cry about education, there was leisure in boyhood. One left a great deal then to the school of life and did not pay so much attention to the school scholastic. The brain had to be nurtured, but it was not saturated. The High School was an unpleasant necessity, it was not an indispensable passport without which no man could hope to reach a position in society. Consequence : Less learning, more freedom, more fresh air, more adoration of God's nature, more boyish and girlish play, and less classics and cramming. I speak by the card. Just as I passed my University examination in Germany the entire *regime* of the schools was altered. We had work enough, in all conscience, but we had time to play, to ride and to swim. Then came the new regulations ; more work and less play. The same thing happened in France ; the boy born in the '90's has by this time to know as much as we hoped to attain when we were seventeen. In England the High School examination papers, which are sometimes submitted to me by boy friends, would puzzle the most acute brain of thirty. In Holland they are not less exigent ; they expect to find room in the skull of twelve for more knowledge than, in the older days, was considered to be sufficient for a head of twice those years. No doubt the new generation is far more advanced than we were, but is it as normal in its condition of mind ? Has it not in its ceaseless competition between youth and learning, lost some of that innate irresponsibility that makes youth so beautiful ? Has it not produced thousands of men young on the surface, but old in every respect other than the number of their years ?

That growing generation has taken to the pen, by forced

or natural impulse, with more avidity than could ever have been conceived by our fathers, and although one would expect that, by the prerogative of their age, they would view the things of the world from a roseate standpoint, the reverse has occurred. A note of sadness rings through nearly all that flows from our youthful pens. Overstudy, over-anxiety in the struggle of life, the serious participation in the serious questions which surround our destiny, has laid its hand with a fatal touch on the inspiration of the young generation that is hammering at the door.

Hence the decay of that spontaneous expression of gaiety which was one of the greatest charms of yesterday's young men. The balance has been lost; we no longer discriminate between the laughable and the ridiculous; and until we can restore to youth its legitimate irresponsibility, I fear that the gentle art of comedy will continue to languish under the tyranny of hot-house education.

THE DRAMA'S BALANCE SHEET.

December 29, 1901

I.

Nothing would be easier than to formulate the position of our national drama at the end of the current year by adopting the style of the financial report of a limited company. Of 1901 one might, without mixing up figures and fancy, say something to this effect: "The directors of the British Drama (still limited), in placing their report before the nation, beg to announce that, although the year's working does not justify them in declaring a dividend, they are happy to report the steady progress of the concern. Contrary to the several years previous to the present report, the directors have not only been able to wipe off, or to minimise, old and new (notably foreign) debts, but they record with satisfaction that, after paying all dues, a substantial amount remains which can be placed to the account of the reserve fund." In other words, without taking an absolutely optimistic view of the situation, it is pretty safe to say that 1901 will occupy an honourable place in our year-books. 1900 was, as you remember, the year of "Herod" and the intensified Shakespearian revival; 1901 is the year of "Iris" in particular, and of a great activity among younger playwrights, with Henry Esmond in the van-guard. Moreover, the taste for the classics has by no means deteriorated, and whilst "Twelfth Night," at Her Majesty's Theatre, still pleasantly dwells in our memory, we ought not to forget our indebtedness to Mrs. Patrick Campbell

for the revival of Pinero's masterpiece, "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," and of his less famous, yet equally remarkable, "Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith."

II.

"IRIS" is the principal play of 1901. You may like it or dislike it; you may condemn its morality or find fault with its form; but what you cannot get away from—and this is intensified by reading the play—is Pinero's power, Pinero's insight into human nature, and the boldness with which he tackles subjects disagreeable to the British Puritan and oftentimes ostracised by the Censor. Almost for the first time in our modern dramatic literature has an author succeeded in trampling under foot the classic canon of the old Greeks. For the first time Mr. Pinero has really done that which the French author, Jean Jullien, called "carving slices out of life and placing them on the stage in an artistic manner." When writing "Iris" Mr. Pinero said: "You, public, shall be subservient to me. I am going to bring before you a tragedy such as may be lived in real life, yet in a manner quite unusual to you. I am not going to stick to three acts or to five as is customary. For my purpose it is necessary that I should carve eight quivering slices from out our midst: now here you have them for better or for worse—leave them or take them." What the reply has been I need not necessarily analyse; some have taken, some have left; for the final verdict I refer you to that near posterity which values "Mrs. Tanqueray" now as it did in 1893.

Of our best known dramatists, one has been silent—Mr. Henry Arthur Jones—but we know he has been militant all the same. Another—Mr. Haddon Chambers—has failed, and for a very good reason. "The Awakening," which was produced at St. James's Theatre, was by no means an intrinsically bad play, but somehow the author of "Captain Swift" and "The Idler," spoilt by precedent, had unlearned where drama ends and melodrama begins. Melodrama caused "The Awakening" to founder

—"with esteem" although with a few bold strokes of the blue pencil and, I am bound to say, better acting, it would have deserved a better fate. Mr. Carton, too, has been unlucky in 1901. His "Undercurrent," feebly sustained by a superstructure of the now somewhat wearisome profusion of epigram, tottered because the groundwork was wanting. Mr. Carton had really nothing to say; he had probably to write a play on commission, and the conflict of these two issues could not fail to be fatal.

Last, but not least, among our well-known dramatists comes Mr. Henry V. Esmond, who has given us in twelve months' space no less than three plays, "The Wilderness," "When we were Twenty-one," and "The Sentimentalist." I can say nothing about the last, because at the time when it was produced I was in New York, and there witnessed the birth of one of the prettiest romantic plays of the last decade, Mr. Justin Huntly McCarthy's "If I were King." "The Wilderness" was an instantaneous success, and redeemed the good fortune of St. James's Theatre which, artistically at least, had for some time been waning. I can imagine better plays than "The Wilderness," plays of a closer woof, of a less artificial atmosphere, of greater dramatic power; but one feels in every play of Mr. Esmond's that he is a man of earnest intentions, a man who commands charm, and one who seeks to graft new ideas on to a well worn stock. "The Wilderness" is a play full of sympathetic touches and, therefore, precisely the kind of entertainment which, if we had many authors of the same stamp, would slowly enfranchise our stage from the baneful influence of inanity and frivolity. Not many months after this success Mr. Esmond scored once more, and those who follow his career were glad to hail his progress, although they took exception to one act of the play which still dwells fresh in everybody's memory. It is not my business to inquire into the inner working of theatres, but it has been clearly pointed out to me from a public platform that if the first night's enthusiasm for "When we were Twenty-one" evaporated long before its time, the fault was entirely Mr. Esmond's. He had

written a charming play, bright as the sun, then suddenly he introduced an eclipse, and the sun set. He was forewarned in America, and so I hear he was forewarned in England, that that third act—you remember it—was a blot on his scutcheon, yet, so proceeds the tale, in love with his own lines, as most authors are, he forbade excision. The result was fatal—the play lived, and died prematurely, those who were its sponsors leaving these shores in disappointment. It is one of those peculiar cases which ought to be held up to young dramatists in order to prove to them that dramatic criticism, which they do not read, is not always futile.

III.

We have had in 1901 the usual sheaf of melodramas, and this time the Lyceum, with "Sherlock Holmes," takes the lead, while "The Great Millionaire," at Drury Lane, is an easy second. One records such plays, but in a chronicle of art one does not deal with them. Much the same might be said about the "Marie Antoinette" plays at the Imperial and Garrick Theatres; valuable productions from the dressmakers' point of view; valueless even in that very low category, the spectacular drama. Gravitating one step higher than spectacular drama pure, one reaches the spectacular drama circumstantial and thoughtful, and in this class—numerous as a rule—I find but one play worth recording, "Becky Sharp," by Robert Hichens and Cosmo Stuart. It goes without saying that a play of this nature, distilled from an immortal novel, is foredoomed by the majority before its birth, yet if one considers the immense difficulties the authors had to contend with, if one conscientiously weighs in how far the adapters have succeeded in the well-nigh impossible task of sending Thackeray across the footlights, one cannot withhold the commendation that if the thing was worth doing at all, those adapters have done it with reverence. Moreover, "Becky Sharp" has given Miss Marie Tempest one more opportunity to approach the first rank towards which

comédiennes aspire, and that in itself justifies the labour of her henchmen.

An earnest drama, in the best sense of the word, was Mrs. Clifford's "Likeness of the Night." It was comparatively the work of a novice, and had many of the faults of the novitiate. Here was a serious attempt to grapple with a phase of life which is becoming all too common in contemporary society: the question of the double household. But Mrs. W. K. Clifford introduced one scene which proved her talent to be truly dramatic and her conception of human nature to be intensely correct. I refer to the scene where the worldly husband of the very old-fashioned wife recognises that, after years of marital life, he has failed to know what is in her until the hour of parting has struck. That was a conflict so intense, so acutely felt, so true to our daily surroundings, that we condone many shortcomings, the unnecessary fourth act, and the ultimate perversion of the best character in the play, for in the great scene of the play we have discovered a dramatist by the grace of nature, and that firstling leads us to expect a felicitous development.

A passing compliment of grace to Mr. Basil Hood's pretty and inoffensive "Sweet and Twenty" and Mrs. T. P. O'Connor's "Lady from Texas," both plays of promise; to the usual sheaf of adaptations from the French, and notably from the German, as some of the latter, "Are You a Mason?" for instance, are very good. After a compliment to the Stage Society, whose plays are better selected than cast, and after the customary twenty years of Sister-Anne-like waiting for production in England; after all these courtesies I now come to the winding-up note of gaiety. It was struck by Mr. Anstey in that inimitable comedy, the only vital English comedy of the year, "The Man from Blankley's." At the time when the play appeared I tried to point out why it deserved a high place on the almost bare shelves of our modern dramatic literature. I have seen it six times since then, I have read it, and am not prepared to take back one single word of my recommendation. Some will say that

the second act, the interminable dinner party in Lower Bayswater, is unusual and therefore somewhat audacious, but knowing Lower Bayswater from the days of my youth, I can but endorse the picture as being a truthful one, illuminated by a keen sense of humour. In writing "The Man from Blankley's," Mr. Anstey has struck that note of gaiety for which we have been so long waiting. It is the note which satirises, yet presents the ways of a certain class of society in its lurid but true colours; therefore, "The Man from Blankley's" is comedy, not farce, in the true sense of the word, and when the play has become common property in print we may well expect that it will meet with the same happy fate as "The Importance of being Earnest," praised by some, but generally derided seven years ago, because at that period the public had not yet risen to the spirit of the author.

"This, gentlemen, is the report of our activity in 1901; it has not been a great year—some of you will say that it was not a good year because there is no dividend to distribute—yet we live in hope, and, with a reserve fund gradually accruing, we view the future with confidence, and pray that if the war, which weighs upon us all, speeds to an early termination, we shall be able at the end of our next campaign to present to you a balance-sheet in which will predominate the sanguine note of gaiety."

DUKE OF YORK'S THEATRE: "THE TWIN SISTER,"

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS, BY LUDWIG FULDA. TRANSLATED
BY LOUIS N. PARKER.

January 5, 1902

I.

First of all let me explain the position which the author of this and other delightful and romantic plays occupies in Germany's world of letters. We, over here, have been very imperfectly introduced, some ten years ago, to Ludwig Fulda by a version of "Der Talisman" which Mr. Parker adapted for Mr. Tree under the title of "Once Upon a Time." The mutual acquaintance did not start with sympathy at first sight. The play's peculiar flavour had evanesced in the adaptor's hands. The action had been cut up for the purposes of the Haymarket, and Mr. Tree's appearance as a disrobed king failed to impress our audience with a sense of the ethereal. Later on the Adelphi produced an unspeakable perversion of Fulda's "Lost Paradise," and finally his charming comedy "Pals" at our German Theatre met with luke-warm recognition, because in those days one German playhouse was not deemed sufficient for London, and both suffered from the competition.

Londoners have, therefore, but a very faint conception of Fulda's power and position. To sum it up as briefly as possible, I might relate that he is honoured in his own country as the finest translator of Molière in modern

times; that his dramatic fairy tales are deliciously flavoured with exquisite minor poetry; that he wields a graceful—almost Gallic—pen of spirited dramatic criticism; and that altogether his talent forms an amiable blend of the romantic era of yesterday and the realistic current of to-day.

II.

The story of "The Twin Sister" deals with the perennial question of the "sister-in-law," and really flows around the magical powers of a bottle of "golden hair-wash." In modern language this story would read as follows:

For five years Mr. Orlando, a gentleman of Padua, had lived more or less happily by the side of a charming lady, who bore him a little cherub of a son. After the first lustrum Mr. Orlando began to feel the weight of wedlock, and his fidelity became doubtful, in fact, he graduated with mastery in that time-worn game which modern society calls flirtation. A kiss stealthily, yet not unobservedly, robbed from a menial's lips, only confirmed Giuditta, the virtuous and lovable spouse, in her conviction that her husband's recent conduct would be the forerunner of a domestic catastrophe. So the lady wisely resorted to that most effective feminine weapon—woman's wit, and while apparently going home to mother, she merely indulged in the aurification of her hair, and reappeared on the scene as Renata, the blonder and gayer twin sister. Being an Italian, she was, of course, a consummate actress, and, having found that sentimentality proved boresome to her husband, she transformed her character into girlish sunniness, and enticed her unsuspecting lord into the very game which had threatened her domestic felicity. As the Frenchmen say, 'you see it all from here.' Giuditta had no sooner metamorphosed into Renata than Mr. Orlando fell an easy prey into a neatly woven net. Over head and ears in love with the fair sister, he is quite ready to part with the darker one, but

at this critical moment Giuditta conquers Renata; explanations, intensified by a sound little homily, follow, and the foundation-stone is laid for a cloudless 'happy ever after.'

During the evening, as the play progressed, I heard many comments on this somewhat commonplace little plot. Some people did not find it funny because the question of the other sister frequently invades the homes of contemporaneous society. Others sneered at it because, in their opinion, the whole thing was too fantastic for words. With the former objection I cannot deal, as it is one of a purely personal nature; it may command our sympathy, yet it is entirely foreign to the character of an inoffensive little poetic play. But as to the story being condemned as too fantastic, well, to such criticism there is but one reply—that he who measures the realm of imagination by the iron standard of logic and everyday-life is not in the right frame of mind to enjoy the gossamer delicacies of light poetry. Really, the plot and the characterisation of such a play go for very little. The main point is in how far the author has understood how to maintain our interest by the melody of his lyre, and in this respect the original version of the comedy is all that could be desired. Mr. Fulda's poetry may not have eagle wings, it may but flutter gracefully like a butterfly, but as a conceit of fancy it is mightily pleasant to the ear, and contains in the most unpretentious form many a word and line worthy of a thinker and a master of verse. To a certain extent the charm of the play was bound to suffer by transplantation; for to substitute for the rhyme of a foreign language prose-like English blank verse is akin to the exchange of a golden sovereign for a handful of silver. The one is sterling metal of undisputed nobility, the other is a somewhat depreciated commodity with a greater face value than intrinsic merit. By this I by no means wish to depreciate Mr. Parker's adaptation, but simply to point out the great initial difficulty with which he had to contend. He has performed his task bravely and some of the longer passages were strikingly rendered

into tuneful, vivid English. Unequal as Mr. Parker is in most of his work, he has not escaped the snare of modernity, and has forgotten that in the days of the Medici one did not use to-day's slang nor express astonishment or dismay by a throughbred British "Damn!"

III.

At the close of the performance, when author and adaptor were called in unanimity, there appeared before the footlights an apologetic gentleman who made a speech and assumed the prerogative which usually belongs to the audience and the critics. This theatrical apparitor-general, after a few courtesies, proceeded to propose votes of thanks for the beautiful play, the excellent performance, and the splendid stage management. He might have gone a few points further, and praised the cloakroom men who mind our coats for 6d., and the programme ladies who also exact a nimble "tanner" for their wares. It may be the manner of the "Syndicate" to coax the critic into laudation, but I am sure that we are unlikely to be influenced like many of our American colleagues. In these columns, at least, we shall not cease to express our opinion in candour and to repress, as forcibly as we can, innovations which we consider to be in bad form. Since the spokesman of the authorities of the Duke of York's Theatre has taken it upon himself to praise the stage management of the play, I am indeed sorry to have to differ. The stage management was not far above the level to which we have become accustomed, and entirely wanting was that fairy-like touch which rendered that performance at the Lessing Theatre, Berlin, so remarkable, so beautiful to the eye, so joyful to the ear. Here there reigned only as much harmony as the individual actor felt inclined to vouchsafe, and as for the harmony of colour, I had better express nothing, except a reference to the ludicrous ballet-girl-like attire of Mr. Norman Forbes, and, in the first act, the accoutrement of Mr. H. B. Irving, on whose shoulders the symbolic mantle of his distinguished father begins to drape very well. The

lighting of the stage, too, lacked fancy, and altogether the question suggests itself whether, when so much money was spent, a little trip to Berlin might not have been thrown into the bargain, for there is a great deal to be learned there. Lest I should be told that all these matters have nothing to do with stage management, I declare that indeed they have. Particularly in the production of poetic plays, and plays of atmosphere, the stage manager should not only teach his actors how to play around furniture, but indeed how to bring out the full value of every line. The points that were missed at this first production were so countless that my pencil found no time to annotate them in the German copy.

Apart from details in finesse, I have nothing but praise for the actors, some of whom added charm to a charming play. The evening at least produced a revelation in the triumph of Miss Lily Brayton, and the rise of Mr. H. B. Irving; it also produced disappointment in Mr. Norman Forbes's impersonation of Parapasco—the comedian and not the buffoon of the play. Henceforth Mr. H. B. Irving, who has done good, and some excellent things, will stand in the front rank. His possibilities are great, and he is in every sense unmistakably the son of his father, except in the pronounciation of the language, wherin he affects accents of cockneyism of jarring peculiarity: but that is a detail. What became apparent on this first night was that Mr. H. B. Irving has powers—greater powers than we have yet fathomed—and that he will be one of the few elect who understand the gentle art of love-making on the stage. His pathos was truly touching; his outbursts were splendid, though somewhat over-exuberant; his courtship was full of elegance and tenderness. The *Giuditta* of Miss Brayton was also a beautiful performance. The part is difficult and taxes the greatest—the famous Jenny Gross has played it in Germany. Still, Miss Brayton came out of the ordeal with wondrous success. She marked the contrast between the two women with striking colours. We enjoyed her happiness, we felt her natural gaiety with its strong undercurrent of “slimness.” At times Miss Brayton

seemed to feel a little over-weighted or fatigued, but, on the whole, she endowed the character with so much grace and fairy-like charm that she may be safely assured of having realised the author's idea.

THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET: "FROCKS AND FRILLS,"

A COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS.

January 5, 1902.

I.

I do not think that it was quite courageous of Mr. Grundy to meet a somewhat derisive call for the author with the statement that not he, but the two Frenchmen, were responsible for the play. But he will, no doubt, settle that with his namesake, the famous British lady who sits in judgment on our manners and morals. What I want to point out is that neither Mr. Grundy nor Scribe and Legouv  have much to do with the Haymarket production, but that all the honours are due to the four dressmaking establishments who made the frocks, and to the actors who adorned them with frills of charming acting.

Stripped, if I may say so, of its finery, the play is but a very poor skeleton conventionally, and not too well-built. After fifty years of French play-writing, it is somewhat late in the day to tell us the story of the impecunious girl of noble birth who is despised by her family so long as she is dependent, and whose shoe-strings everybody wants to tie as soon as, with her fairy-like fingers and finely-organised brain, she has built up a position and fortune, and justified pretensions to a high prize in the matrimonial market.

Of course, the real excuse for the existence of the play is the third act, in which we are introduced to the amusing

mysteries of a fashionable dress-making establishment; and when there, a beautiful woman like Miss Ellis Jeffreys is made to remove her bodice, and exhibit a camisole of delicate lace, a climax is hoped for which should be sufficient to draw the town.

Being of a sophisticated nature, I am not to be bamboozled by frocks, frills, and furbelows, and feel inclined to make straight for the heart of the thing. And then I come to the somewhat doleful conclusion that there is not an ounce of human nature in this play, and just as much nicely manufactured wit as is necessary to spice long explanations and not over-exciting dialogues. For the benefit of the crowd, the stuttering young Baronet, who was one of the most fascinating characters in the play of forty years ago, is now allowed to indulge in some twenty big "D's," but somehow the crowd grew weary of this compliment to its vulgarity, and when the account was finally settled the adaptor had to pay the piper. I do not for a moment contend that there is not some cleverness in Mr. Grundy's version, for a man of his intellect could not fail to infuse some brightness even into the narrative of a time-worn story. But the main objection is that the game is not worth the candle, and that his energies might have been better employed. We all know that Mr. Grundy is the prophet of the well-made play. His is the play in which every joke, every situation, every morsel of comic relief, every piece of furniture, has its mathematically-appointed place. Every method, however, has its day, and even the agreeable wardrobe, which covered a multitude of sins, was unable to conceal the old-fashioned cut of antiquated Parisian material.

II.

The criticisms of Mr. Grundy's principal contributors, Mesdames Nettleship and Lucile, and Messrs. Jay and Paquin, must be left to tenderer hands than mine. I admire their play-writing, but it is beyond my power to analyse it. Coming to the actors, it may be ungrudgingly

admitted that their efforts were worthy of a better play, and no wonder, for there were such excellent exponents in the cast as Mrs. Charles Calvert, the sprightly Miss Lottie Venne, Miss Ellis Jeffreys, who is always fascinating, and Messrs Aynesworth and Eric Lewis, a little band which would lead any forlorn hope to victory.

But the interest of the evening centred in Mr. Cyril Maude and in Miss Grace Lane, now, for the first time, entrusted with a part of no mean importance. Mr. Maude reached his high-water mark in "The Second in Command," and it is scarcely a compliment to him to say that he surpassed himself. But it is undeniable that in the whole of his career Mr. Maude has scarcely had so difficult a task as in this artificial part of a *ne plus ultra* stutterer. The character affords every opportunity for degeneration into mere clownery ; therefore, an actor of great refinement was required to adapt it to the frame of pure comedy. This is what Mr. Maude did ; he spoke every line, he valiantly struggled with some two dozen "damns," but he did not over emphasise. He tried to make the thing plausible, and succeeded so well that we are not likely soon to forget good Sir Richard Kettle. Miss Grace Lane, too, had a little world of weight to carry on her young shoulders. Whatever human nature could be instilled into the universal-providing character of the wonderful lady dress-maker must be her own ; the author gave her merely words which required more than ordinary amplification, and therefore threatened many a pit-fall. That Miss Lane built of such material a womanly picture of great winsomeness and no apparent affectation, proves that her talent is capable of great development. She showed us something of the "fair hands" which in our younger days rendered the original of "Frocks and Frills" a famous play in Continental Europe.

"MRS. WARREN'S PROFESSION."

January 12, 1902.

I.

It was an exceedingly uncomfortable afternoon. For there was a majority of women to listen to that which could only be understood by a minority of men. Nor was the play fit for women's ears. By all means let us initiate our daughters before they cross the threshold of womanhood into those duties and functions of life which are vital in matrimony and maternity. But there is a boundary line, and its transgression means peril—the peril of destroying ideals. I go further. Even men need not know all the ugliness that lies below the surface of everyday life. To some male minds too much knowledge of the seamy side is poisonous, for it leads to pessimism, that pioneer of insanity and suicide. And, sure as I feel that most of the women, and a good many of the men, who were present at the production of "Mrs. Warren's Profession" by the Stage Society, did not at first know, and finally merely guessed, what was the woman's trade, I cannot withhold the opinion that the representation was unnecessary and painful. It is mainly for these reasons that, in spite of my great admiration for Bernard Shaw, the play was not brought out by the late Independent Theatre. As a "straight talk to men only" it is not sufficiently true to life to be productive of an educational effect. As a drama it is unsatisfactory, because the characters have no inner life, but merely echo certain views of the author. As literature, however, the merits of "Mrs.

Warren's Profession" are considerable, and its true place is in the study.

II.

"Mrs. Warren's Profession" is a "problem play" in the fullest sense of the word. Mr. Shaw will probably deny it, and claim that it is ordinary actable drama, but the text will give evidence in my favour. We hear Mr. Shaw all the time, and whatever vitality the characters possess is not their own, but Mr. Shaw's. They own also much of his contradictory elements—his depth of observation and thought and his extraordinary "cussedness." Here, as in most of G. B. S.'s work, the sublime is constantly spoilt by the ridiculous. It is the author's manner, and his way to express his contempt for the public. But that is a mere side issue. The main point is whether the problem is worth discussing and whether it has been dealt with in an adequate, convincing manner. I say no on both counts. The problem is neither vital nor important. It has none of the *raison d'être* of "Le Fils de Coralie" by Delpit, of "La Dame aux Camélias," and of "Ghosts." The case of Mrs. Warren has been invented with such ingenuity and surrounded by such impossibilities that it produces revolt instead of reasoning. For Mr. Shaw has made the great mistake of tainting all the male characters with a streak of a demoralised tar brush; he has created a cold-blooded, almost sexless daughter as the sympathetic element: and he has built the unspeakable Mrs. Warren of such motley material that in our own mind pity and disgust for the woman are constantly at loggerheads. If the theme was worth treating at all the human conflict was the tragedy of the daughter through the infamy of the mother. Instead of that we get long arguments—spiced with platform oratory and invective—between a mother really utterly degraded, but here and there white-washed with sentimental effusions, and a daughter so un-English in her knowledge of the world, so cold of heart, and "beyond human power" in reasoning that we end by

hating both ; the one who deserves it, as well as the other who is a victim of circumstances. Thus there are false notes all the time, and apart from a passing interest in a few scenes, saved by the author's cleverness, the play causes only pain and bewilderment, while it should have shaken our soul to its innermost chords.

It is not so easy to explain this singular effect, or, rather, it would be easy if it did not behove us to touch this work—in a newspaper—with kid-gloved fingers. Mr. Shaw, in his attempt to portray a woman of Mrs. Warren's type, either lacked the courage to play *misere-ouverte*, or, what is more likely, he had not sufficient knowledge of the monstrosity of such beings. His Mrs. Warren is a black soul with spots of human feeling dotted on in whitish chalk. But the real Mrs. Warren is the most abject creature in all humanity. I cannot say more. I can but refer Mr. Shaw to Parent-Duchatel, to Yves Guyot, to Dr. Commange, to Leo Taxil's "Corruption fin de siècle"—to a whole library on the colossal subject of human debasement. If Mr. Shaw had fully known the nature of Mrs. Warren's profession he would have left the play unwritten, or produced a tragedy of heartrending power. Now he has merely philandered around a dangerous subject ; he has treated it half in earnest, half in that peculiar jesting manner which is all his own. He has given free reins to his brain and silenced his heart. He has therefore produced a play of a needlessly "unpleasant" understructure to no useful end. A play that interests in part, repels in others ; a drama that plays fast and loose with our emotions, and will in some awaken a curiosity which had better been left in slumber.

III.

It is the fashion in some quarters to express condolence with the actors when a play is of an outspoken, unpleasant nature. I see no reason for such uncalled-for patronage. Condolence is in its right place when talent is wasted on futility ; but when actors of their own accord choose to

appear in works of uncompromising candour, they should be criticised in the ordinary way, and not humiliated by doubtful apologies. Artists like Miss Fanny Brough, Miss Madge McIntosh, like Mr. Granville Barker and their companions, know full well what they do when they appear in plays like "Mrs. Warren's Profession"; they know also that writers like Mr. Shaw have no ulterior motives when they deal with strong subjects, and that they afford great chances of distinction to the actor.

The performance of "Mrs. Warren's Profession" proved no exception to the rule. In spite of the disadvantage of a cramped stage and impracticable scenery in the theatre of the Lyric Club, the acting reached the highest mark. Miss Fanny Brough, a woman of more brain and heart than half a dozen of our more or less leading ladies *en bloc*, achieved that which had long been predicted by her admirers. She proved that she is not only a splendid comédienne, but that she is endowed with the profounder gifts which characterise tragic actresses. Whatever vitality the character of Mrs. Warren now and again seemed to achieve, whatever feeling of sympathy was aroused in the spectator, sprung from Miss Brough's magnificent impersonation. She had to play upon the entire clavier of emotions, and in that exceedingly difficult concerto there was not a wavering note, let alone an inharmonious chord. The younger actress, Miss McIntosh, was also fully equal to her task. She did her best to minimise the frigid side of the daughter's strange character, and to kindle every little spark of womanhood into flame. Her performance betrayed great study and a carefully-planned conception of a part which in less capable hands would seriously try the patience and the sense of humour of the audience.

But the play was admirably cast from first to last, Mr. Charles Goodhart and Mr. Julius Knight, Mr. Granville Barker and Mr. Cosmo Stuart, they all worked with an ardour unwonted in any theatre except where "art for art's sake" is the motto.

AVENUE: "AFTER ALL,"

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS, BY FREEMAN WILLS AND F.
LANGBRIDGE.

January 19, 1902.

I.

Commend me to the Reverends Freeman Wills and Frederick Langbridge for compressing the ten Commandments into a so-called wholesome melodrama. Excepting coveting one's neighbour's wife—for which there was no opportunity, as there was no wife, but only a maid or two and a widow in the cast—every mortal offence forbidden by the Decalogue is to be found in this play of "After All." There are seduction, suicide, murder, burglary, perjury. There is a copious, and in my estimation, wanton invocation of the Name Divine; there are terrible bores who clowned ten minutes in the second act for comic relief's sake. There are also a couple of pistol shots, a trial-scene, an endless-wire speech for the defence (by the actor-manager), and yet, with all this ado, the melodrama is nothing more than mediocre. It is even a trifle worse than that, for it is pompous.

In old times, melodrama was merely a compilation of situation: dialogue did not much matter, and quality was not expected—no more than the painter's fine touch in an oleograph print. It was unpretentious fare for the unpretentious, and the simpler it was the better it went down, the more it pleased the masses and the classes. Thus, in our time, we have all loved the "Two Orphans," the

"Ticket-of-Leave-Man," and such like, because they were frankly inartistic, and exciting by their amazing dexterity of construction. But nowadays melodrama loves to give itself airs. It scorns the appellation "Melodrama," which savours of "no class"; it calls itself "romantic drama," and sometimes, as in the present case, "a new and original play."

A *new and original* play "suggested" by Lord Lytton's novel!

With the exaltation in rank there must go hand in hand exaltation in style, and so the shoddy material of the harrowing school is adorned with rhetorical flowers and blossoms of fine writing. Unfortunately, the pattern and the decorations do not match—the sensational and the practical are discordant bed-fellows, and in the unequal pairing both must suffer. The fine writing spoils the play, and the play spoils the fine writing. It is hard for the authors who have done their best to besprinkle their manner of expression with the lilac-like scent of Maeterlinck's symbolism; but it is the truth. If they had stuck to melodrama, as they did in "The Only Way," "After All" would probably have scored a success. But too much finery has blurred the time-honoured picture.

II.

From a purely dramatic point of view, the authors, after starting well on precisely the same lines as in "The Only Way," have made the mistake of slackening the interest in the course of the action's progress. The real drama began when Eugene Aram, accused of murder, was bidding farewell to his bride. If she had loved him, there would have been the great conflict between love and anguish—real drama therefore. But Eugene was not truly beloved by Madeleine—her heart was her cousin's all the time. Eugene was the grande passion of Nancy, the other and less prominent Miss Orchard, whom he merely liked, but would not even accept when he sought a new life to expiate his past. Thus, when Madeleine, hearing that he

has committed murder, refuses to crave Heaven's blessing for Eugene, we feel no pang. We find it natural that she turns away ; for her, at any rate, the detection of the crime is a good riddance. This knowledge that there is no love-conflict at stake robs the trial scene of its main interest. Eugene now merely fights for his life, and as he has indeed a guilty conscience, there is little in his defence to appeal to our sympathy. After all, murder, even committed under provocation, remains a heinous offence, and, having heard what Eugene had to say to whitewash his character, we cannot but agree with the judge that the verdict of "Not Guilty" was misguided. Moreover, the defence itself was bad. It was technically awry, badly written, and entirely failed when, for the sake of a poor joke, the circumstantial evidence of the murdered man's bones is linked to the trival expression of "making no bones about it." Altogether, this Eugene Aram of the play is but a poor descendant of the renowned Eugene whom Lytton the Magnificent rendered immortal.

III.

The actors were sorely tried by the play. They all seemed to try to make bricks without straw. It was words all the time, and except Miss Mabel Terry-Lewis—who makes good progress, and in a powdered wig reminded one of her comely aunt Ellen—no one had a real opportunity. But Miss Terry-Lewis wrestled valorously with her rather colourless part. She wafted sweetness across the footlights, and when she played the harp and sang a pretty tune by Mr. Norman O'Neill, voice and touch told us more plainly than words how much true feeling there lives in this young actress. Mr. Martin Harvey—always a fine picture of a *pater doloroso*—did not seem quite comfortable in his part. It was no doubt for him that the authors introduced mild philosophy of a hazy meaning. Mr. Harvey is the high priest of dreamland-poetry, he excelled in "Pelleas and Melisande," and he has been maeterlincking ever since. I think that it is well to warn him that too much atmos-

phere is likely to produce evaporation. Not every form of language sounds well in languid tones. There must be affinity between word and voice, such as the art of Maeterlinck demands; but it is a far cry from "Pelleas" to "After All," and for once, Mr. Harvey's musical mutterings miss their wonted spell. I felt it notably in the speech for the defence in the last act. Here was a man on supreme trial, a man battling against terrible adversity, against overwhelming testimony. Such a man on such an occasion cannot bridle his feelings all the time. The aching heart must break down the fence of restraint. For anguish, like murder, will out; and, in the outburst, all self-control goes to the winds. In Mr. Harvey's oration there was no agony, there was the soberness, the suppressed would-be emotion of a barrister; but absent was the soul-stirring outcry of fathomless agony which would prompt a jury to acquit when the evidence unmistakably pointed to guilt. In other respects Mr. Harvey displayed his wonted skill, and often he realised the position of a hunted conscience. But the trial scene was *la scène à faire*.

Upon its evolution, its phrasing, its rendering, depended the fate of the play; and the fact that both authors and players failed to rise to the occasion accounts for the verdict that "After All" scored a victory of King Pyrrhus.

“MADEMOISELLE MARS,”

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS, BY PAUL KESTER.

January 26, 1902.

I.

ONE touch of a stagey nature makes the whole world grin. The play had fairly run its not too exciting course, and there was every prospect that the world would go very well after Napoleon's gracious pardon to the lover of Mademoiselle Mars, when the author was unwise enough to drag in the culprit and let him and Mrs. Langtry indulge in recantation. That determined the gallery, and for awhile there was a bloodthirsty atmosphere in the house. Fortunately Mr. Kester deemed discretion the better part of valour, and declined the honour of being jeered at. But the incident in itself gave one matter for thought if the play itself did not. Here was a Napoleon story of the pattern which has become familiar since Sardou wrote that play of the laundress, "Sans-Gêne." Mr. Kester appropriated its ground-work, and in an equally festive mood he cut little slices out of the prototype and annexed them to his story. Thus, for instance, we have a general who is at least a half-brother of Sans-Gêne's husband, and Fouché is transplanted bodily from Sardou, including all the asiniuity which is sometimes part and parcel of policemen's ultra-smartness. Here was a play mounted by an actress renowned for her love of the luxurious and the exquisite; a fabulous sum must have been spent on the dresses of Parisian manufacture and

historical fidelity. Yet, in the anxiety to cut the garments aright, some details of the cloth were forgotten, and in this production, outwardly so correct, people spoke of "Mammesal," "Monsieur le Duke," and other atrocities. You will say, "A detail." I retort, "Perhaps so—but a detail which reveals the defects of a system." For the superficiality of the affair does not stop there. If Mr. Kester narrowly escaped an uncomplimentary reception, it was because, in all the wealth showered upon his work, not one of his henchmen, neither the manageress nor the stage director, neither the stage-manager, nor the assistant-stage-manager, proved to have any notion of that science indispensable in the theatre, yet entirely neglected over here, the optics of the stage. Anti-climax ruled supreme in every act, but in the final scene it destroyed the last chance. When, after Napoleon's act of clemency towards the actress' lover, who was rightly or wrongly (it isn't very clear) accused of an attempt on the Emperor's life, there was a reunion of the couple just to introduce a few final embraces, the public laughed. The veriest tyro at stagecraft, the veriest outsider present at the dress rehearsal might have nonplussed so ludicrous a mistake. For the rest it is an inoffensive play; it will not ignite our river nor harrow our feelings. On me it made the impression of the adroit allocutions wherewith our conjurors are wont to adorn their most obvious tricks. And certainly when Mdlle. Mars stole the heart-shaped muff of her rival, a copy of her own, which contained the Emperor's free pass, I certainly thought of Mr. Bertram and Carl Hertz who would have done the sleight-of-hand with a dexterity infinitely more bewildering. As a mild amusement for people overfed with the amenities of the musical comedy "Mdlle. Mars" may be recommended by way of an alternative. But he who would enter the theatre with the desire to be instructively amused, had better remember the fateful lines which herald in Dante's Divine Comedy.

GEORGE WORLITZSCH.

January 26, 1902.

I.

"GEORGIE," said Josephine Dora, the accomplished wife of my late friend, as she was studying her new part in Hauptmann's "Rother Hahn" while cosily sipping her afternoon coffee, "Georgie, I feel I am getting on with the character, but I am a little afraid of the last act."

"How so, my dear?" asked George Worlitzsch.

"Well, you know, that apoplectic fit at the end seems rather difficult."

"Never you mind that, mother, I will put you right; I will show you how to do it."

And then the wife went on studying, and the husband with the manuscript before him, chuckled because his *mise-en-scène* of the play had succeeded beyond expectation.

A few hours later, on that same ominous January the twenty-second, which last year plunged our German Theatre into mourning and loss, George Worlitzsch, stricken to the heart, lay a dead man on the stage which had become his bed of honour. For he was called away, as it were, in the midst of his glory; he had never acted with more spirit, never danced with more nimbleness, and when the curtain fell there rushed a wave of applause towards the joyful actor and his beaming wife such as is rare even in the enthusiastic little world of the German Theatre at St. George's Hall. It was a tragedy of terrible suddenness, but his own wish was fulfilled. Sometimes, talking to his wife about the far away future, he used to

say, "When the time comes, I hope to die in harness, and without a warning." He never thought then that the time would come so soon, and that his hour would strike in the fulness of his manhood.

II.

George Worlitzsch was but forty-five years old, but in his short life he accomplished the task of a Hercules. He was never ill, he was never tired, and the word trouble did not exist in his vocabulary. Nor did he do his work in a half-hearted way. In three short seasons of the German Theatre in London he created no less than forty different parts and undertook the stage direction of some twenty plays. Yet there was not one part which he filled unsatisfactorily, not one play which was stage-managed in an inefficient manner. Listen to it, young English actors, blush, and—endeavour to follow his example!

No, there does not stand a single failure to the debit of George Worlitzsch. On the other hand, what a series of hard-earned, well deserved successes! Remember his Friar Lessing's "Nathan," a fragment of humour worthy of the best comedian of our times; his von Keller in "Magda," the whited sepulchre yet man of the world *par excellence*: his Kessler in "The Battle of the Butterflies"—the "drummer" to the life; his Vogelreuter in "Johannesfeuer," a piece of rural Germany transplanted to the Thames; his Wulkow in "Biberpelz"; his Moses in Reuter's "Onkel Bräsig." And then recollect how he would mimic grand opera and the ballet in his inimitable parodies, how he would sing a comic song with the manner and *finesse* of an Albert Chevalier. But better than all that, let me recall the cardinal quality of this truly considerable actor, who always thought of the cause before he thought of himself, and was content to shine in the second, third, or last rank when the exigencies of the play demanded someone else in the first. Many and many a time when he and I used to put our heads together to cast a difficult play, he dealt with the knotty question as to who

should play certain small and ungrateful parts in a truly Alexandrian manner. "Let's hew the knot in twain," he would say in his bluff manner; "I will play the part *und damit basta*." One can imagine how delightful it was to work with such a man, and if I testify here, after three onerous seasons, that our relations have never been clouded by disagreement, let alone unpleasantness, I do not flatter the truth for the purpose of a fulsome obituary, but simply relate it undefiled as it will ever live in my memory.

But you will see from the following little incident what manner of man he was.

Some weeks ago we were rehearsing a big piece, and besides our usual forces we had enlisted the services of some enthusiastic amateurs. The piece gave a lot of trouble on the small and old-fashioned stage of St. George's Hall, and somehow Worlitzsch lost his temper, whereupon the amateurs took their leave.

Half-an-hour afterwards he rushed panting into my office and exclaimed, "I am displeased with myself; I know I lost my temper; I was wrong." "But, my dear friend," said I, "was it worth your while to come here after all your hard work? Surely we can patch up this little affair."—"I know you would say that," he retorted; "but I wanted to tell you that I was wrong, before you could hear it from others—my conscience left me no peace."

No wonder that all the world loved a character so chivalrous and so frank.

III.

Worlitzsch had a record of no mean order. He had played in some of the best theatres of Berlin; at the Residenz in the palmy days of Anton Anno the author, at the Wallner, under Hasemann, and he was looked upon as one of the best *bon vivants* in Germany. Afterwards, for awhile, followed a period of drifting, until he came here as stage-manager with August Junkermann. Then the tide turned again in his favour. We soon saw what a jewel this man was, and how perfectly he was matched in every

sense of the word to his wife, that woman of genius, Frau Dora, whose great Hauptmann creations will "astonish the nations" in the Fatherland. Practically from the first day of their appearance Dora and Worlitzsch became the pets of our little public, and while her smile flooded the stage with gaiety, his genial, vivacious, manly personality, his extremely mobile face, his youthful gait kept the ball rolling so well that even a poor play would pass muster.

It is difficult to define Worlitzsch's position as an actor. He has played every kind of part—young men, old men, character rôles, comedy; he has been a "raisonneur" and a "villain"; a priest and a clown; a lover and a low comedian. To say that he excelled in all would be extravagant, but that he successfully moulded every character to fit his personality is indisputable. For he was a worker who would not rest until he had achieved his aim. Personally I liked him best as "raisonneur." He dominated the stage by the amiable assurance of his manner, and his tongue, ever glib, gave a peculiar flavour to a dialogue of terse, caustic fibre, such as Hauptmann and Sudermann know so well how to write. But Worlitzsch had not yet reached his zenith when he died. A great future lay before him. One day he would have been a splendid impersonator of the "comic father" of the stage. Alas! it is too late now for these speculations. He has gone long ere we could spare him, and as we bemoan the dear friend and fellow-worker, we heave a sigh at the thought that a pillar has been wrenched from the frail structure of our struggling German Theatre.

FINIS.

A BRILLIANT NOVEL.

The Comedy of Progress

By REGINALD TURNER, Author of "Cynthia's
Damages," "The Steeple," etc.

Second Edition. Crown 8vo, Cloth Gilt, SIX SHILLINGS.

SOME PRESS OPINIONS.

Bookman.—"A political novel of decided interest, picturing modern society, political method and influences, a really great lady, and a young man who thinks. Mr. Turner's style is bright, shrewd, and trenchant."

Pall Mall Gazette.—"A cleverly written story of more than usual interest. Mr. Turner has here something to say, and says it well. From the first page onward we follow the career of Maurice Yorke with close interest, an interest which never flags, and the final chapter is in every way equal to the book's earlier promise. There is nothing slipshod, no falling off. The author has given us sterling good work throughout. The characterisation of Lady Sothern is excellent—so human withal. 'The Comedy of Progress' is a brilliant novel, its title, by the way, fitting it 'like a glove.'"

Glasgow Evening Times.—"Mr. Reginald Turner has achieved another success in 'The Comedy of Progress.' It is a clever novel, pleasantly satirical, bright in style, and with skilfully sustained interest in the fanciful social and political personages who figure in its pages."

Morning Post.—"Readers will be delighted with 'The Comedy of Progress' by Reginald Turner. The story is told with skill and true artistic effect. Lady Sothern is an excellently drawn character, full of life and force. The charm and influence which she exercises over all who know her are quite convincingly expressed, and the scene with her husband when she confesses herself an old woman and stamps on her jewels is very ably done. Mr. Turner may be sincerely congratulated on accomplishing a difficult task with more restraint and ability than one generally expects in such efforts."

Spectator.—"Problems and politics are dealt with in 'The Comedy of Progress,' and both are to a certain extent successfully treated. The story is readable, and the pictures of Society are not badly drawn."

Daily Telegraph.—"Mr. Turner has a pretty knack of touching off a character, or expressing a quaint thought, in a couple of lines, and there is no blinking the fact that some of his portraits are diverting likenesses of people he has met in the flesh."

St. James's Gazette.—"The book is decidedly clever. Maurice Yorke himself, Lord and Lady Sothern, and Jonas Allen, are distinct and well-drawn characters, conceived and maintained with considerable skill. The story is something more than a political novel. It is concerned with the philosophy of life and its aims. There is much serious thought and practical wisdom in its pages, set forth in dialogue which is always amusing and sometimes brilliant."

Athenæum.—"The Comedy of Progress' contains clever conversation and well-realised characters."

The County Gentleman.—"Mr. Turner is evidently an exceedingly close observer of men and matters, and, in addition, he has a considerable power of analysis of emotions and impulses of the springs which move to action and the restraining forces which control men's natural desires and ambitions. . . . 'The Comedy of Progress' is throughout wittily and well-written, and ought to interest those who like a serious subject carefully treated, and with more than an occasional passage of pure fun and humour."

A NEW SOCIETY NOVEL.

The Silver Gate

By C. FORESTIER-WALKER,

Author of "The Derelict and Tommy," etc.

SECOND EDITION.

SIX SHILLINGS.

THE QUESTION

Whether it is possible for a woman to reach the supreme height of loving twice in her lifetime is a question so often put and so seldom answered. Women will almost unanimously agree that it is not possible; men, in whom of course the bump of vanity is more strongly developed than in the weaker sex, will wisely dismiss the subject by saying that of course it is possible, and will temporarily become apparently dead to the world around them, doubtless looking back into the already dim past, when the loves of some "dear, dead women" (as Swinburne sings) for the moment filled their lives. In Mr. Forestier-Walker's powerful novel, "The Silver Gate," the question is put and answered in three distinct phases—the simple country life, the streets of midnight London, and the great world as lived in country houses. The study of a girl's character who is prepared to make for her first love the supreme sacrifice—and the agony of mind that she goes through when later she sees the possibility of what she had been ready to do, may wreck the ideal life she leads when she loves for the second time—is sharply yet tenderly told; and the sidelights of the best and worst of society which are thrown on the picture help to accentuate what we believe to be a true story.

BOOKS WORTH READING

BEING A LIST OF THE
New and Forthcoming Publications

OF

GREENING & CO., LTD.

20 Cecil Court

Charing Cross Road

SEASON 1901

LONDON, W.C.

GENERAL LITERATURE, CRITICISM,
POETRY, ETC.

English Writers of To-Day :

Being a Series of Monographs on living Authors.

The following are the first volumes in the Series :—

Rudyard Kipling. The Man and His Work. Being an attempt at an "Appreciation." By G. F. MONKSHOOD, Author of "Woman and The Wits," "My Lady Ruby," etc. . . . Containing a portrait of Mr Kipling and an autograph letter to the author in facsimile. A new and cheaper edition. Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, 3s. 6d.

Daily Telegraph.—"He writes fluently, and he has genuine enthusiasm for his subject, and an intimate acquaintance with his work. Moreover, the book has been submitted to Mr Kipling, whose characteristic letter to the author is set forth on the preface. . . . Of Kipling's heroes Mr Monkshood has a thorough understanding, and his remarks on them are worth quoting" (extract follows).

Globe.—"It has at the basis of it both knowledge and enthusiasm—knowledge of the works estimated and enthusiasm for them. This book may be accepted as a generous exposition of Mr Kipling's merits as a writer. We can well believe that it will have many interested and approving readers."

Scotsman.—"This well-informed volume is plainly sincere. It is thoroughly well studied, and takes pains to answer all the questions that are usually put about Mr Kipling. The writer's enthusiasm carries both himself and his reader along in the most agreeable style. One way and another his book is full of interest, and those who wish to talk about Kipling will find it invaluable, while the thousands of his admirers will read it through with delighted enthusiasm."

20 Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, London, W.C

Bret Harte: A Treatise and a Tribute. By T. EDGAR PEMBERTON, Author of "The Kendals," "Life of Sothern," etc., with a new portrait of Mr Bret Harte and a Bibliography. Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, 3s. 6d.

Spectator.—"A highly interesting book."

Daily Mail.—"An interesting biography full of good things."

Sunday Sun.—"A pleasant and interesting memoir."

Whitehall Review.—"A truly delightful book. . . . Written in no mean spirit of adulation, it is a well-balanced, characteristic, and fair estimate of a personality and a mind far above the average."

Sunday Special.—"It is an intensely interesting life story Mr Pemberton has to tell. . . . This little volume is eminently readable, full of excellent stories and anecdotes, and is in short a very admirable commentary upon the work of one of the brightest masters of the pen that the great continent overseas has produced."

Daily Express.—"Every true lover of Bret Harte ought to get Mr T. Edgar Pemberton's book. There are not many authors, alas! that would bear study at close range, but here certainly is one where knowledge of his early struggles and trials will only increase our affection and interest in the man himself and his stories. Mr Pemberton has shown in this book the qualities of an ideal biographer. His touch is light, his figure stands clear, and we find in his work a strong human note we learned long years ago to associate with the creator of *M'Liss*."

Algernon Charles Swinburne. A Study. By THEODORE WRATISLAW (Dedicated to Theodore Watts-Dunton), with a new portrait of Mr Swinburne and a Bibliography. Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, 3s. 6d.

Daily News.—"Mr Wratishaw's work is always dignified and eloquent, and not without critical acuteness."

Review of the Week.—"It is not only a study, it is an entertainment. It has dignity and no dullness. . . . Though an appreciation, it is not an exaggeration. The summing up, though masterly, is not tyrannical. It is concise and sufficient, and is as artistically written as artistically informed. Author and publisher have combined to make the book one not only to peruse, but to possess. The price is more than moderate, the *format* more than presentable."

Court Circular.—"This little volume forms an excellent handbook to his (Swinburne's) writing. It is not simply an eulogy, but rather a discriminate appreciation and a loving analysis of the poet's works, which are dealt with chronologically as they were published. The exposition helps greatly to elucidate many of the poems, and the criticisms are fair and unbiased. Those who know their Swinburne well will find a new pleasure in the poems after reading this book, and those who have hitherto been deterred from studying him are put in possession of a golden key to unlock the gateway of an enchanted garden. Mr Wratishaw has fulfilled his task ably and well, and has earned the gratitude of all lovers of English poetry."

VOLUMES OF E. W. O. T. (in active preparation).

George Meredith. By WALTER JERROLD.

Hall Caine. By C. FRED. KENYON.

Arthur Wing Pinero. By HAMILTON FYFFE.

W. E. Henley, and the "NATIONAL OBSERVER"
Group. By GEORGE GAMBLE.

20 Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, London, W.C.

Mrs Humphrey Ward } In One Volume.
Mrs Craigie } By W. L. COURTNEY.

Thomas Hardy. By a well-known Critic.

Realistic Writers of To-day. By JUSTIN HANNAFORD.

The Parnassian School in English
 POETRY. (ANDREW LANG, EDMUND GOSSE and ROBERT BRIDGES.) By Sir GEORGE DOUGLAS.

Richard Le Gallienne. By C. RANGER GULL.

The Wheel of Life. A Few Memories and Recollections (de omnibus rebus). By CLEMENT SCOTT, Author of "Madonna Mia," "Poppyland," etc. With Portrait of the Author from the celebrated Painting by J. MORDECAI. Third Edition. Crown 8vo, crimson buckram, gilt lettered, gilt top, 2s.

Weekly Sun (T. P. O'Connor) says:—A Book of the Week—"I have found this slight and unpretentious little volume bright, interesting reading. I have read nearly every line with pleasure."

Illustrated London News.—"The story Mr Scott has to tell is full of varied interest, and is presented with warmth and buoyancy."

Punch.—"What pleasant memories does not Clement Scott's little book, 'The Wheel of Life,' revive! The writer's memory is good, his style easy, and above all, which is a great thing for reminiscences, chatty."

Some Notable Hamlets of the Present Time.

(SARAH BERNHARDT, HENRY IRVING, BEERBOHM TREE, WILSON BARRETT and FORBES ROBERTSON.) By CLEMENT SCOTT, Author of "The Drama of Yesterday and the Drama of To-day," etc. Illustrated with portraits drawn by W. G. MEIN, and an appreciation of Mr Clement Scott by L. ARTHUR GREENING. Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, 2s. 6d.

Pilot.—"This book will be eagerly read by all who, not having had an opportunity of seeing this or that actor in the character, is anxious to know 'how it was done.'"

Court Circular.—"Interesting and valuable. Indeed it would be difficult to name any better theatrical criticism. The style is nervous and vivid, and the critical acumen displayed of a high order. . . . The criticisms are a valuable contribution to dramatic literature, and will be read with great interest by all playgoers."

Glasgow Herald.—"The dramatic critic's vivid impressions and subtle analysis enable us to compare the varied interpretations which dramatic genius have put upon Shakespeare's great creation. They will make interesting reading for the student as well as the playgoer, for Mr Scott does not fail to note deviations from this or that text, and departures from traditional 'points' and hackneyed effects."

"Sisters by the Sea." Seaside and Country Sketches.

By CLEMENT SCOTT, Author of "Blossom Land," "Amongst the Apple Orchards," Etc. Frontispiece and Vignette designed by GEORGE POWNALL. Long 12mo, attractively bound in cloth, 1s.

Observer.—"The little book is bright and readable, and will come like a breath of country air to many unfortunates who are tied by the leg to chair, stool, or counter."

Dundee Advertiser.—"It is all delightful, and almost as good as a holiday. The city clerk, the jaded shopman, the weary milliner, the pessimistic dyspeptic, should each read the book. It will bring a suggestion of sea breezes, the splash of waves, and all the accessories of a holiday by the sea."

A Vagabond in Asia. A Volume of Travel off the Beaten Track. By EDMUND CANDLER. With Illustrations from Photographs, and a Map showing the Author's route. Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s.

Morning Post.—"Brightly written and full of observation that throws vivid and playful sidelights here and there, and provides entertainment that does not always appertain to works of travel."

Daily Express.—"A delightful and intimate work."

Sunday Special.—"There is an intense enthusiasm, a poetic fervour, and a dry sense of humour, such as you only find at intervals among books."

Outlook.—"These records of *Reiselust*, or go-fever, as we may call them, are off the beaten track, are novel, manly and picturesque."

Standard.—"The book is written with humour, his impressions of men and places are vivid, and the charm of the volume is heightened by illustrations, some of which bring us face to face with typical natives of the East, whilst others afford fair glimpses of tropical scenery."

Captain Mayne Reid: His Life and Adventures.

By his WIDOW and CHAS. COE, U.S.A. With numerous Portraits and Illustrations. Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, 3s. 6d.

Daily Graphic.—"A fascinating work in which Captain Mayne Reid's life is carefully and sympathetically sketched."

World.—"The career of this popular writer was adventurous and thrilling, and Mr Mayne Reid tells in the most entertaining manner the literary history of her husband and the eventful incidents of his career. Altogether it is a fascinating biography of an interesting person."

Weekly Despatch.—"A truly fascinating volume which should be read by everyone."

The Messiahship of Shakspeare. Sung and expounded by CLELIA (CHAS. DOWNING). Demy 8vo, art cloth gilt, 5s.

Daily Telegraph (W. L. COURTNEY) says:—"It is a wonderful book that Mr Downing has written, and no brief analysis could do it adequate justice."

Review of the Week.—"It is a very remarkable book, and the ideas set forth in it are startlingly original. . . . The man who is not moved to think deeply after reading this book must indeed be 'dead to the soul.' In a style that is beautiful in its simplicity Clelia works out his conclusions with marvellous skill."

Westminster Review.—"Contains much sound criticism of a new and daring kind. . . . The book should be read by all Shakspearean students."

God in Shakspeare. An Evolution of the Ideal in the Poet's Works. By CLELIA (CHAS. DOWNING), Author of "The Messiahship of Shakspeare." Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s.

Daily Chronicle.—"Intelligent and scholarly, acute and careful."

Glasgow Herald.—"A knowledge of Shakspeare unrivalled except by Mr Swinburne."

Scotsman.—"Really profound insight. Keen and clever analysis."

A Book of the Poster. By W. S. ROGERS. Profusely Illustrated with Examples of Poster Work by the famous Poster Artists of the day. 4to, cloth, 7s. 6d.

Sketch.—"A complete and valuable work upon an important and interesting subject."
St James's Gazette.—"A large and handsome book. Well written and beautifully illustrated."

Whitehall Review.—"The way Mr Rogers has done his work is a testimonial at once to his knowledge and a monument to his taste. This very handsome volume . . . is worthy of a place in anybody's library."

Bookman.—"An interesting and valuable book for all interested in poster work and poster collections. The illustrations are thoroughly representative and excellently produced."

Northern Lights and Shadows. Stories of Eskimo Life. By R. G. TABER, with some folk lore tales translated from the original Eskimo, and an autograph letter from the Marquis of Lorne reproduced in fac-simile. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

Daily Chronicle.—"We take pleasure in commending the book because of its freshness and genuine excellence. Mr Taber has undoubtedly struck what is a virgin soil so far as fiction is concerned. The local colour of the story is novel—so novel, in fact, as to give quite an unusual interest and value to the book."

Umpire (Book of the Week).—"Mr Taber has the gift of story-telling, and he has the peculiar satisfaction of being first in an entirely new field. There is undoubted fascination in his pages."

Outlook.—"Well written and decidedly entertaining. It is to be hoped that Mr Taber may produce another series of characteristic stories, as direct in their appeal to the sympathy as are these."

Literature.—"Fresh and uncommon. Mr Taber really gets the Arctic atmosphere and feeling into his work."

Woman: A Study and Defence. Adapted from the French of ALFRED FOUILLÉE by the Rev. T. A. SEED. Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, 2s. 6d.

Review of the Week.—"An interesting little book. The scientific arguments are lucidly and convincingly put."

Sunday Special.—"There is much curious information in this little book, first as to the scientific origin and formation of the feminine portion of humanity, and next as to woman's limitations and powers."

Scoteman.—"It is a suggestive essay on the eternal question of the Eternal Feminine, the principal points in which problem it states with neatness and brevity, and argues out with commendable conciseness."

Some Home Truths re The Maori War,
1863 to 1869, on the West Coast of New Zealand. By Lt.-Col.
EDWARD GORTON (New Zealand Militia), late Captain H. M.
29th and 57th Regiments. Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, 2s. 6d.

A Trip to Paradoxia, and other Humours of the
Hour. Being Contemporary Pictures of Social Fact and Political
Fiction. By T. H. S. ESCOTT, Author of "Personal Forces
of the Period," "Social Transformation of the Victorian Age,"
"Platform, Press, Politics, and Play," Etc. A new and cheaper
edition. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

Standard.—"A book which is amusing from cover to cover. Bright epigrams abound in Mr Escott's satirical pictures of the modern world. . . . Those who know the inner aspects of politics and society will, undoubtedly, be the first to recognise the skill and adroitness with which he strikes at the weak places in a world of intrigue and fashion. . . . There is a great deal of very clever sword-play in Mr Escott's description of Dum-Dum (London), the capital of Paradoxia (England)."

Bye-Ways of Crime. With some Stories from
the Black Museum. By R. J. POWER-BERREY. Profusely
Illustrated. Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

Outlook.—"Decidedly you should read Mr Power-Berrey's interesting book, taking laugh and shudder as they come."

Sheffield Independent.—"We do not remember to have ever seen a more popularly-written summary of the methods of thieves than this bright and chatty volume. It is the work of a writer who evidently has a most intimate knowledge of the criminal classes, and who can carry on a plain narrative briskly and forcibly. The book fascinates by its freshness and unusualness."

Liverpool Review.—"This is no fanciful production, but a clear, dispassionate revelation of the dodges of the professional criminal. Illustrated by numerous pen and ink sketches, Mr Power-Berrey's excellent work is useful as well as interesting, for it will certainly not assist the common pilferer to have all his little tricks made public property in this lucid and easily-rememberable style."

The Art of Elocution and Public Speaking. By
ROSS FERGUSON. With an Introduction by GEO. ALEXANDER.
Dedicated by permission to Miss ELLEN TERRY. Second Edition.
Crown 8vo, strongly bound in cloth, 1s.

Australian Mail.—"A useful little book. We can strongly recommend it to the chairmen of public companies."

Stage.—"A carefully-composed treatise, obviously written by one as having authority. Students will find it of great service."

Literary World.—"The essentials of elocution are dealt with in a thoroughly capable and practical way. The chapter on public speaking is particularly satisfactory."

The Path of the Soul. Being Essays on Conti-
nental Art and Literature. By S. C. de SOISSONS, Author of
"A Parisian in America," etc. Illustrated with portraits, etc.
Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, 10s. 6d. (in preparation).

From the Book Beautiful. Being Some Old Lights Re-lit. By the Author of "The Hypocrite" and "Miss Malevolent." Cloth gilt, gilt edges, 3s. 6d.

Lloyd's.—"Full of reverence, yet glows with vivid imagination. . . . These are Bible stories in a most novel and attractive form, never irreverent, but full of the keenest interest."

British Weekly.—"Among the many attempts which have recently been made to fill out the Bible stories with the realistic touches suggested by our increased knowledge of the conditions of life in ancient times, this anonymous volume will take a high place. Seven stories are retold, some from the Old, some from the New Testament. To certain tastes they may seem too elaborately wrought, the author evidently relishes what is gorgeous, and his descriptions of Potiphar's house are very richly inlaid with ornament, but whatever be the judgment of readers in this respect, there can be no question as to the effective realism of the narratives. Certainly some of the stories will convey both to children and adults fresh and memorable conceptions of Biblical scenes."

MARIE CORELLI

Patriotism or Self-Advertisement?

A Social Note on the Transvaal War, 1899-1900. By Marie Corelli. Sixth Edition. 4to, sewed. 2d.

Nebo : The Merchant of Susa. A Drama in Three Acts.

By A. J. FERREIRA. Small 8vo, hand-made paper, art cloth, gilt, 2s. 6d. nett.

Daily Mail (Glasgow).—"The story unfolded is very interesting and full of exciting incidents."

Aberdeen Free Press.—"A highly readable piece of work, and it would, we feel sure, if suitably mounted and in the hands of capable actors, prove eminently effective on the stage. The action is rapid, there are no diffuse vapourings, and there is ample scope for attractive scenic effect."

Independent (Sheffield).—"The Assyrian setting makes a novel background, and there is movement and some striking situations in the play."

Ideal Physical Culture, And the Truth about the Strong Man. By APOLLO (the Scottish Hercules and Sandow's Challenger). Fourth Edition. Profusely illustrated, cloth, 2s. 6d.

To-day.—"It is a very sensible book, and Apollo knows what he is talking about."

County Gentleman.—"Will prove useful to aspiring young athletes."

Westminster Gazette.—"Those who take an interest in Physical Culture will find the manual instructive and useful."

Football Echo.—" 'Ideal Physical Culture' scatters to the wind much of the nonsense and bunkum written *ad nauseam* about the strong man, his biceps, his triceps, the muscular fat, and his stupendous feats."

The Year Book of the Stage. Being an annual record of criticisms of all the important productions of the English Stage, with copious Index and complete Caste of each Play recorded. Compiled by L. ARTHUR GREENING. About 260 pages, strongly bound in cloth, 3s. 6d.

A History of Nursery Rhymes. By PERCY B. GREEN. This interesting Book is the result of many years research among nursery folklore of all nations, and traces the origin of nursery rhymes from the earliest times. Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, 3s. 6d.

Morning Post.—"Contains a great deal of pleasing information concerning the origin of our nursery songs, fairy tales and games . . . and the author treats his subject in a manner which is both entertaining and intelligible."

World.—"Will be found entertaining by everybody."

Spectator.—"The reader will find much curious matter in Mr Green's volume."

Examiner (Cork).—"A comprehensive and thoroughly interesting book."

Madame.—"A most interesting book. . . . To those mothers who have their children round them in the story-telling twilight this book of Mr Green's should be a treasury of delight."

In Quaint East Anglia. Descriptive Sketches. By T. WEST CARNIE. Illustrated by W. S. ROGERS. Long 12mo, cloth, 1s.

Observer.—"That East Anglia exercises a very potent spell over those who once come under its influence is proved by the case of George Borrow, and all who share in the fascination will delight in this brightly written, companionable little volume."

Graphic.—"It is a prettily got up and readable little book."

Saturday Review.—"Will be welcomed by all who have come under the charm of East Anglia."

A Man Adrift. Being Leaves from a Nomad's Portfolio. By BART KENNEDY, Author of "Darab's Wine-Cup," "The Wandering Romanoff," etc. This very entertaining book is a narrative of adventures in all parts of the world. Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s.

Mr ANDREW LANG, in the course of a long and laudatory notice in **Longman's Magazine**, said:—"It is a strange photograph of rude and violent life. The narrator always carries his life in his fist. He describes, better than any other writer, the existence of a tramp, and gives an amazing account of the brutality, and even torture, practised on workers in some parts of the United States. . . . The book is as simple in style as Swift's writing; a kind of labouring Trelawny might have fathered these adventures of a younger son."

Mr RICHARD LE GALLIENNE (in the **Idler**).—"A Man Adrift' has held me as few recent books have power to do. The book is 'real' because it has first been really lived, and then been really written. Mr Kennedy's book has held me, not only by its reality, but by its courage, its pity, its humour, its all-embracing humanity, its quiet fierceness. 'A Man Adrift' is a brave book."

Morning Leader.—"The record of an adventurous life, when well told, always appeals to the imagination and sympathy of the reader, and 'A Man Adrift' is such a record. Presumably the adventures are real; they have all the vividness of reality at all events, and one follows the hardships and wanderings of the narrator with keen interest. . . . Mr Kennedy is to be congratulated on his 'Man Adrift.'"

County Gentleman.—"This is the book of a strong man. It has vigour, originality and power, and comes as a refreshing change after the maudlin sentimentality of most modern stories. . . . Mr Kennedy has a characteristic style. He writes in short, crisp sentences that are at once direct and fearless. It is mainly his own story that he tells in this strangely fascinating volume."

Woman and the Wits. Epigrams on Woman, Love, and Beauty. Collected and edited by G. F. MONKSHOOD, Author of "Rudyard Kipling: The Man and His Work," "Lady Ruby," etc. New and revised edition. Small 8vo, art vellum, gilt extra, gilt edges, 3s. 6d.

Great Thoughts.—"The most beautiful book on my table is 'Woman and the Wits.' . . . In this lovely volume of about 200 pages some of the wisest, wittiest, tenderest epigrams on woman and on cognate topics to be found in ancient and modern times, have been brought together with taste and judgment."

Ladies' Pictorial.—"The compiler of this dainty little volume has produced a veritable lucky bag for the dipper who is anxious to find something smart and clever."

Madame.—"A book that should find favour on every woman's table."

Literary World.—"The epigrams are well selected, and should form a perfect armoury for any young bachelor put up to propose the toast of 'The Ladies.' . . . There is good variety too."

Dress in a Nutshell. By "R." A Booklet every woman who wishes to dress tastefully should certainly possess. Crown 16mo, cloth, 1s.; sewed, 6d.

Weeds and Flowers. Poems by WILLIAM LUTHER LONGSTAFF, Author of "The Tragedy of the Lady Palmist." Crown 8vo, art cloth, gilt extra, gilt top, 2s. 6d. nett.

Sun.—"Mr Longstaff has real fire and passion in all of his work. He has a graceful touch and a tuneful ear. There is exquisite melody in his metre."

Times.—"He has passion and energy enough to stock half a dozen average minor poets. . . . But he has in him something of the stuff of which poetry—as opposed to verse—is made."

Court Circular.—"Unquestionably a poet of a very high order—musical, suggestive, imaginative and picturesque. 'In the Times to come' is a beautiful poem, full of suggestion, with a subtle melody of its own. How well Mr Longstaff can write is seen in 'A Hopeless Dawn.' It is the work of a true poet. Mr Longstaff's poems deserve more extended notice. There is art in his work, and music; and his verse is full of promise. Mr Longstaff's muse is frank and sincere, and many of his readers will forgive her for not posing as a prude."

Ballads of Ghostly Shires. By GEORGE BARTRAM, Author of "The People of Clopton," "The White-headed Boy," etc. Dedication accepted by Theodore Watts-Dunton. Small 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d. nett.

Speaker.—"We hail with the greatest pleasure Mr George Bartram's 'Ballads of Ghostly Shires.'"

Academy.—"His descriptive passages have the true poetic touch, and a fresh grace about them. He is, in truth, well worth reading, and has the distinction of writing narrative verse well in a lyric age. It is a breezy, picturesque, taking little book."

Athenæum.—"Mr Bartram has the gift of description, and his vigorous narrative verse moves swiftly."

Sunday Sun.—"Remarkable and beautiful poems. Enjoyable reading."

Village Life and Feeling. Songs and Verses.

By RUPERT UPPERTON, the Ploughboy Poet. 2s. 6d. nett.

Scotsman.—"This is a pleasant and an interesting volume of healthy English verse. . . . The book deserves to be read, and will interest any curious lover of poetry."

North Star.—"Amusing and instructive poems illustrative of village life. Those who are on the lookout for new recitations should examine this volume."

Glasgow Herald.—"His humour and satire are genial and well-meaning. He is not without sentiment, and his lyrical pieces will be heartily appreciated."

Morning Leader.—"There is some good stuff and not a little quaint feeling in the verses of Rupert Upperton."

St Andrew's.—"Many a simple soul—and there are millions of such in our land—utterly unable to appreciate the poetry of the critics, will find itself charmed, purified and elevated by the kindly muse of Mr Upperton. Messrs Greening & Co. have done their work well, and enshrined these 'woodnotes wild' in a beautiful piece of letterpress."

HER MAJESTY'S EDITION

Rip Van Winkle, together with "THE LEGEND

OF SLEEPY HOLLOW." By WASHINGTON IRVING, and the Complete Literary and Theatrical History of the Story by S. J. ADAIR FITZ-GERALD, Author of "Fame, the Fiddler." With Portraits of Her Majesty's Theatre Company, and Illustrations by W. G. MEIN. Dedicated to Mr H. Beerbohm-Tree. Crown 8vo, art cloth, decorative cover by Will Smart, top edge gilt, 2s.

Bookman.—"This edition of Irving's famous legends is in every way to be commended. Type, paper and illustrations are good, and Mr Fitz-Gerald adds to the originals the stage and literary history of 'Rip van Winkle,' which is well worth reading."

Pall Mall Gazette.—"A pretty and interesting little book."

Topical Times.—"A really interesting memento, and it costs only 2s.—a perfectly absurd price for a book of this size and quality. Beautifully bound in green cloth, red lettered, it is well printed, and artistically illustrated by Mr Will G. Mein."

Greening's Masterpiece Library

"A handsome and artistic series." *Vide Press.*

Ringan Gilthaize. A Romance of the Covenanters. By

JOHN GALT. Edited, with an Introduction, by Sir GEORGE DOUGLAS. Crown 8vo, cloth, gilt edges, 3s. 6d.

St James's Gazette.—"The splendid panorama it gives of some of the most stirring and far-reaching events in Scottish history, and the skill shown by the author in so arranging his materials that the historic is always subordinated to the human interest, render the book in every way worthy of revival."

Rasselas. A Romance of Abyssinia. By Dr JOHNSON.

Edited, with an Introduction, by JUSTIN HANNAFORD. Illustrated by W. S. ROGERS. Crown 8vo, cloth, gilt edges, 3s. 6d.

Morning Leader.—"Well printed and pleasant to handle."

Globe.—"A very acceptable edition. The text is set forth in large, bold type; Mr W. S. Rogers supplies eight graphic illustrations, while Mr Justin Hannaford furnishes an introduction in which the literary history of the story is pleasantly recounted."

20 Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, London, W.C.

Vathek. An Eastern Romance. By WILLIAM BECKFORD.
 Edited, with an Introduction, by JUSTIN HANNAFORD. Illustrated
 by W. S. ROGERS. Crown 8vo, cloth, gilt edges, 3s 6d.

Saturday Review.—"A work of vivid and picturesque imagination, great power, and no small originality. It is saturated with the fragrance and voluptuousness of the East."

Outlook.—"In the way of Eastern romances '*Vathek*' has always easily stood first. The present edition is handsomely got up, and contains several well-executed illustrations."

The Black Tulip. A Romance of Old Holland.
 By ALEXANDRE DUMAS. Newly done into English, with Intro-
 duction, by S. J. ADAIR FITZ-GERALD. Illustrated by JOHN
 HASSALL. Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, 3s. 6d.

Sun.—"A delightful edition artistically bound and attractively got up. Mr John Hassall is seen at his best in the illustrations."

Glasgow Herald.—"We recommend it, not only as one of the most interesting, but as without exception, and in every sense of the word, the most readable of Dumas's works."

The Epicurean. A Tale of Mystery and Adventure.
 By THOMAS MOORE. Edited, with an Introduction, by JUSTIN
 HANNAFORD. Illustrated by WILL SMART. 8vo, cloth, gilt
 edges, 3s. 6d.

Bookman.—"An interesting, well-produced reprint of Moore's popular Eastern romance."

Great Thoughts.—"It is as bright, and fresh and entertaining as when first it took the reading world by storm in 1827."

Whitehall Review.—"This reprint is welcome, and the manner in which it is printed, bound and produced, is a credit to the eminent firm who are responsible for the edition."

Salathiel; or, The Immortal. A Wonderful Romance
 of Old Palestine. By Dr GEO. CROLY. Edited and revised, with
 an Introduction, by Rev. T. A. SEED. Illustrated by W. G. MEIN.
 Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, 3s. 6d. (In preparation.)

Asmodeus; or, The Devil on Two Sticks. An Illus-
 trated Edition of the Celebrated Novel by LE SAGE, Author of
 "Gil Blas." Edited by JUSTIN HANNAFORD. Illustrated by
 JOHN HASSALL. Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, 3s. 6d. (In preparation.)

Colomba. A Corsican Romance. By PROSPER MERIMÉE,
 Author of "Carmen." Edited, with an Introduction, by Rev.
 T. A. SEED. Illustrated by W. S. ROGERS. Crown 8vo, cloth
 gilt, 3s. 6d. (In preparation.)

*Several well-known and popular works by great writers are in
 active preparation for this artistic series of masterpieces.*

POPULAR FICTION

An Obscure Apostle. A Powerful and Dramatic Tale, translated from the Polish of M^{de}. ORZESZKO by Count S. C. de SOISSONS. Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s.

Saturday Review.—"An absorbing and delightful story, and we are sure it will be read with the greatest pleasure by those who can best appreciate the merits of the finer kinds of fiction."

British Weekly.—"A good story, dramatic, poetic and pathetic."

Daily Graphic.—"An admirable translation of a fine, intensely human tragedy. One reads it from first to last entirely fascinated."

Bookman.—"A deeply impressive story it is, and if Madame Orzeszko has written others equally good, we must hope Count de Soissons will translate them for us."

St James's Gazette.—"A curious and interesting story, which, apart from its power, deserves notice because of the novelty of its material. The jaded appetite, weary of English drawing-rooms, Californian mines, and Indian flirtations, will here find an absolutely fresh *entourage* to a very remarkable story. . . . It is pictorial, poetic and dramatic."

The Modern Argonauts. A Novel. By ELIZA ORZESZKO, Author of "An Obscure Apostle." Translated from the Polish by Count C. S. DE SOISSONS. Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s.

Liverpool Review.—"The Modern Argonauts' is a remarkable piece of fiction; a work of powerful conception, of original and charming expression, and of noble and exhilarating thought."

Spectator.—"Madame Orzeszko paints in 'The Modern Argonauts' the domestic tragedy of a successful modern millionaire with a boldness and a vigour that remind one of Jokai. The characterisation shows the influence of modern ideas in their most advanced and disintegrating form. . . . It is a luridly picturesque problem novel."

Daily News.—"The picture which Madame Orzeszko presents, painted on impressionist lines, with suggestions of the symbolistic school, is distinctly striking. . . . Each of the characters in this stirring work is individualised with great skill."

Daily Chronicle.—"A powerful story, clever and amusing."

Dundee Courier.—"The story is powerful; the English vigorous; the moral commendable."

Evening Times.—"Its power fascinates us. The originality of the conception, the skill with which the characters are drawn, and the vigour and vividness of the writing testify not only to keen insight into human nature, but to Madame Orzeszko's maintenance to the eve of threescore years rare and youthful freshness."

A Girl of the North. A Tale of London and Canada. By HELEN MILECETE. Second Edition. Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s.

Saturday Review.—"It is piquant and up-to-date. Miss Milecete's style is engagingly direct and simple, and she has a natural talent for story-telling."

Topical Times.—"A pretty story, charmingly written. . . . It is pleasant to read, mainly because it is well written, but its glimpses of existence in Canada and West End life do not lack either picturesqueness or humour."

Outlook.—"There is some clever writing in this novel, and the Canadian chapters are particularly fresh and picturesque."

An Exile in Bohemia. A powerful and enthralling Novel. By ERNEST E. WILLIAMS, Author of "Made in Germany," etc., etc. Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s.

A Detached Pirate. A Novel. By HELEN MILECETE,

Author of "A Girl of the North." Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

Ladies' Pictorial.—"A clever and audacious book. The story is told in letters, and very clever letters they are . . . Miss Vandeleur is not *nerve*, and I prefer her wholesome audacity to the wild wailing of 'The Love Letters of an Englishwoman.'"

Court Circular.—"A bright and fascinating book."

Truth.—"A light and bright modern story of a *divorcee* with herself as co-respondent. Her habit of masquerading as a maud got her into this truly American scrape, and the truly American way in which she got out of it and was re-united to her Othello, is told in the difficult form of letters with a spirit worthy of so whimsical a plot."

Committed to His Charge. A Canadian Romance.

By KATE and ROBINA LIZARS. Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s.

Athenæum.—"This book is decidedly interesting. The authors have a very pleasant gift of gaiety and an agreeable way of expressing themselves."

Daily News.—"Both interesting and amusing."

Record.—"Very clever and humorous."

Daily Graphic.—"A clever and entertaining novel."

Christian World.—"The incidents connected with the four years' rectorship of Tom Huntley are cleverly arranged and as cleverly told. . . . We have nothing but praise for this book, which is strongly suggestive of George Eliot's 'Scenes from Clerical Life.'"

His Grace's Grace. A Powerful Novel. By the

Author of "The Hypocrite," "Miss Malevolent," etc. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

Where the Oranges Grow. A Humorous Novel.

By N. A. LEYKEN (the Russian Mark Twain). Translated from the original by Count C. S. DE SOISSONS. Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s.

The Tragedy of a Pedigree. An Interesting

Story. By HUGO AMES. Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s.

Sketch.—"Such easy epigrammatic talk as is to be found in this book is not often met with. It is witty and delightful, and the characters seem to be drawn from life with a master-pen."

Scotsman.—"An excellent story, well written and easily read."

Sunday Special.—"Can be recommended as a bright, terse, epigrammatic novel of to-day. There are so few writers who are capable of constructing a neat and telling epigram that the present volume is doubly welcome."

Vanity Fair.—"This novel is entertaining, suggestive, gently cynical and quick with promise."

Madame.—"It is a crisp delineation of modern social life, abounding in excellent characterisation, sparkling dialogue and epigrams that are new and smart. There is scarcely a page of the book that does not contain a sentence worth reading a second time and then marking with pencil for another perusal."

Red Fate. A Powerful Novel. By EDMUND FORBES.

Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, 6s.

Daily Despatch.—"In 'Red Fate' we have a daring book. Messrs Greening have in Mr Forbes the writer of a strong book that will cause some talk."

The Scotsman.—"The story possesses the merits of freshness, originality and ingenuity. It is written in an animated and picturesque style, and is full of life and incident."

Onlooker.—"Mr Edmund Forbes has drawn a striking study, and his style and language are always most scholarly. Grellier is a real and living character. It is a book that could only have been written by one endowed with the imagination and musical pen that betray the poet."

The Prettiness of Fools. A Realistic and Powerful Novel. By EDGAR HEWITT. Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s.

Literary World.—"Very entertaining reading."

Dundee Advertiser.—"A singularly strong story."

Morning Post.—"An ambitious hook, ambitious in its style and in the bold way it affects to tackle matters which are generally reserved for private conversation. At the same time it were ungracious to deny that Mr Edgar Hewitt has written a very clever book, full of keen observation, and not unseasoned with humour."

Gentlewoman.—"A powerful and interesting hook, with the interest kept up till the end . . . altogether a very amusing and clever book."

The Magnetism of Sin. A Tale Founded on Fact. By "ÆSCULAPIUS." Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

Midland Mail.—"An interesting story. . . . Exceedingly well written."

Daily Despatch.—"The Magnetism of Sin' is a story as choke full of mystery as any tale could be. . . . The author of the book—who is obviously a very daring young man—has written a story which is as remarkable in its way as 'The Mystery of a Hansom Cab.'"

Evening News (Manchester).—"Lovers of the sensational in fiction will find plenty to interest them in 'The Magoetism of Sin.' . . . The story is full of romance and dramatic incident, the chapters dealing with the raid on the house by the police, the fight for liberty, the bold escape of the double-dyed traitor, and his subsequent capture and execution in Australia being particularly thrilling."

The After-Taste. A Novel. By COMPTON READE, Author of "Hard Lines," "Under which King," etc. Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s.

Dr PARKER (of the City Temple) says:—"From beginning to end the action of the story is most vivid and most natural. It must certainly win itself many readers."

Literary World.—"This novel is decidedly above the average."

Daily Graphic.—"Amplly repays for the reading, for it is written with a keen sense of the fitness of things, and without setting probability at naught—qualities not too frequently found in novels. It is written in a sympathetic style, and keeps the attention centred in the interesting career of the heroine."

Daughters of Pleasure. A Novel. By ANNA, COMTESSE DE BRÉMONT. Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, 6s.

Topical Times.—"Brisk and spicy without being blatant and salacious . . . a very good book, which says a lot of things that wanted saying frankly but delicately. It is, at the same time, an engrossing romance."

Globe.—"Readers will find plenty of cleverness and 'go,' the Bohemian side of artistic life being described with verisimilitude as well as graphic force."

Books of To-day.—"A story of deep human interest, set forth with undoubted literary talent, sense of style, and an ability to handle pure narrative that is rare and welcome. A book which can not only be read with interest, but re-read."

The Seekers of Sentiment. A Series of Powerful Stories. By a "WESTMINSTER SCHOOLBOY." Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s.

The Power of the Past. A Novel. By DAISY HUGH PRYCE, Author of "The Pasha," "Goddesses Three," "Valda Hanem," etc. Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, 6s.

A Son of Africa. A Tale of Marvellous Adventures.

By ANNA, COMTESSE DE BRÉMONT, Author of "Daughters of Pleasure," "The Gentleman Digger," etc. Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s.

Morning Post.—"Written with unmistakable power."

Weekly Times.—"Deserves to be the success of the season."

World.—"Contains striking incidents graphically related. We cannot fail to admire the ingenuity displayed by the writer."

St James's Gazette.—"A strange and weird story is 'A Son of Africa,' the latest from the pen of Anna, Comtesse de Brémont, author of 'The Gentleman Digger.' From the writer of that story we expect and get vivid word-pictures and local colouring. The descriptions of scenery and incident are wonderfully striking and impressive. . . . Such is the story of 'A Son of Africa' in brief outline. The filling in is sometimes lurid, but always forceful. It is written with power and grip."

The Gentleman Digger. Realistic Pictures of Life

in Johannesburg. By ANNA, COMTESSE DE BRÉMONT, Author of "A Son of Africa," etc. New Edition, revised to date, with a new Preface. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

Academy.—"The Comtesse de Brémont presents us with a terribly realistic picture of life in Johannesburg during the ragi of the gold fever."

Daily Telegraph.—"Those who like a good story, pleasantly told, should read 'The Gentleman Digger.' . . . Readers who turn their attention to this volume will, apart from the interesting plot, gain much insight into the manners and customs of a land which is only just breaking into civilisation as we understand it."

Spectator.—"The characters are true to life, and the narration is continuous and spirited. The Comtesse de Brémont knows how to describe people and places, and there is local colouring."

Cynthia's Damages. A Story of Stage-craft. By

REGINALD TURNER. Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, 6s.

In The World of Mimes. A Story of Theatrical

Life. By LEWIS MELVILLE, Author of "The Life of Thackeray," etc. Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s.

Mora: One Woman's History. An Interesting Novel by

T. W. SPEIGHT, Author of "The Crime in the Wood," "The Mysteries of Heron Dyke," etc. Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s.

Scotsman.—"One may run through the story of 'Mora' with considerable enjoyment of the brisk development of an amusing little drama. . . . It is clever in contrivance, and lively and entertaining."

Athenæum.—"The story is pleasing and wholesome. Its general character is that of a comedy with occasional lapses into the realm of drama. . . . 'Mora' is quite like literature, with some amusing scenes, and a general prevalence of good temper."

Two Days in a Life-time. A Novel. By T. W.

SPEIGHT, Author of "Mora," etc. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

For Himself Alone. A Novel. By T. W. SPEIGHT,

Author of "The Mystery of Heron Dyke," etc. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

Ashes Tell no Tales. A Novel. By Mrs ALBERT

S. BRADSHAW, Author of "False Gods," "The Gates of Temptation," "Wife or Slave," etc. Cloth, 3s. 6d.

Lady.—"A strong and dramatic novel."

Record.—"The story shows great power and the character of Julie is a wonderful creation."

North Star.—"The book is considerably above the average, and bears evidence of insight into character and skill in plot construction of no mean order. The story has a thrilling interest, and is dramatically told."

Ira Lorraine. A Story of To-day. By CORALIE FEVEZ.

Crown 8vo; cloth gilt, 6s.

Illustrated London News.—"Full of incident and movement."

Weekly Despatch.—"This is a very pretty love story charmingly told. The characters are cleverly drawn. There are, of course, trials, and the lights and shadows of a woman's troubled career, but what love story was ever written without its trials and the inevitable 'all's well'? In the case of 'Ira Lorraine' the end is satisfactory."

A Comedy of Temptation; or, The Amateur

Fiend. A Tale. By TRISTRAM COUTTS, Author of "The Pottle Papers." Cloth, 3s. 6d.

Daily News.—"A very bright and breezy little story, wholesome and amusing."

Athenæum.—"May be heartily recommended. A really ingenious story, and provides quite pleasurable excitement, while throughout the book runs a vein of facetious humour which will make it doubly welcome."

Echo.—"A very sprightly tale, which, despite the extravagance of its leading motive, is full of humour—good humour and human nature."

Daily Telegraph.—"The author of the unquestionably humorous and conspicuously successful 'Pottle Papers' has given the novel-reading public another 'taste of his quality' in this fantastic story. . . . The element of surprise predominates throughout this eminently entertaining narrative; unexpectedness is the essential characteristic of all its more salient incidents, comical or tragical; its dialogue sparkles with genuine, irresistible fun."

Spectator.—"Mr Tristram Coutts has a genuine gift of humour, and his account of the chequered courtship of a young London clerk is enlivened with many hilarious touches. The account of the household of Mr Merridew, the irrepressible, if impecunious, optimist who named all his numerous progeny after famous commanders and authors, is really delightful."

The Weird Well. A Tale of To-day. By Mrs

ALEC M'MILLAN, Author of "The Evolution of Daphne," "So Runs my Dream," etc. Art cloth, 3s. 6d.

Sootsman.—"Carefully constructed and written with skill, which makes it always agreeable to read."

Literary World.—"An interesting, brightly-written story."

Weekly Times.—"Very powerfully written. Will be read with breathless interest."

Such is the Law. An Interesting Story. By MARIE

M. SADLEIR, Author of "An Uncanny Girl," etc. Cloth, 6s.

Vanity Fair.—"A very entertaining novel."

Sun.—"An undoubtedly clever novel, told in vigorous language."

St James's Budget.—"So full of incident is 'Such is the Law' that we are unable to do more than touch the fringe of the plot, and must leave to the reader the task of watching the development of the new romance, which produces an aftermath of happiness for Lavender, and brings a thoroughly interesting story to a satisfactory close."

— **And Afterwards?** A Powerful Novel. By
MRS HAROLD GORST, Author of "Possessed of Devils." Crown
8vo, cloth, 6s.

A Virtue of Necessity. A Powerful Tale. By
HERBERT ADAMS. Cloth gilt, 6s.

Sun.—"A powerful, stirring tale of the present day. From start to finish it is interesting, especially to lady readers."

Literary World.—"The writing is good, and many of the remarks are smart and pungent while free from any straining after cleverness."

Record.—"Eminently readable throughout."

Athenæum.—"The dialogue is natural and well rendered."

The Shadow on the Manse. A Story of Religion
and the Stage. By CAMPBELL RAE-BROWN, Author of "Kissing-
Cup's Race," etc. Cloth gilt, 3s. 6d.

Public Opinion.—"An excellent novel in every way."

Bookman.—"An interesting story well told."

Weekly Sun.—"A touching story and a clever one."

Literature.—"The situations are . . . treated with a satirical bitterness of tone. But many of the scenes are strong in themselves, cleverly arranged, and treated with power and reticence. . . . There are occasional faults, but the tenderness with which Mary Paul's self-sacrifice is recorded, makes us inclined to condone them and to congratulate the author."

A Social Upheaval. An Unconventional Dramatic
Satirical Tale. By ISIDORE G. ASCHER, Author of "An Odd
Man's Story," "The Doom of Destiny," etc. Crown 8vo, cloth
gilt, 6s.

Daily Telegraph.—"The hero is an interesting dreamer, absorbed in his schemes, which are his one weakness. To women, save when they can further the good of his cause, he is obdurate; in business, strong, energetic and powerful. He is shown to us as the man with a master mind and one absorbing delusion, and as such is a pathetic figure. No one can dispute the prodigality and liveliness of the author's imagination; his plot teems with striking incidents."

Vanity Fair.—"The story tells itself very clearly in three hundred pages of very pleasant and entertaining reading. The men and women we meet are not the men and women we really come across in this world. So much the better for us. But we are delighted to read about them, for all that; and we prophesy success for Mr Ascher's book, particularly as he has taken the precaution of telling us that he is 'only in fun.'"

A Cry in the Night. An exciting Detective Story.
By ARNOLD GOLSWORTHY, Author of "Death and the Woman,"
"Hands in the Darkness," etc. Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s.

Pall Mall Gazette.—"The book is ingenious and cleverly constructed, and there is no lack of exciting reading, it is melodramatic, but is relieved by humour characteristic of Mr Golsworthy."

Athenæum.—"A creditably ingenious tale of crime and detection, drawn with spirit and humour."

Morning Post.—"We must give Mr Golsworthy high praise for the way in which he plays the game. Old hands as we are at these things, we were for a long time completely baffled by the plot as the most wooden-headed detective of fiction. . . . It is an excellent book of its particular kind. Mr Golsworthy has succeeded admirably in the careful, clever, amusing character-drawing of an odd group of subsidiary folk. These are very human people who stick in the mind after the book is closed."

A Dead Woman's Vow. A Powerful Story. By
EMILE ZOLA. Translated by Count C. S. DE SOISSONS. Crown
8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

Sapho. A new Translation, by G. F. MONKSHOOD, of
DAUDET's celebrated Romance. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

Thais. A new Translation, by E. F. MOODY, of the cele-
brated Romance of Old Egypt by the great French novelist,
ANATOLE FRANCE. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

Shams! A Social Satire. By ———? This is a remark-
able and interesting story of Modern Life in London Society. It
is a powerful work, written with striking vividness. The plot is
fascinating, the incidents exciting, and the dialogue epigrammatic
and brilliant. "Shams" is written by one of the most popular
novelists of the day. Sixth Edition. Crown 8vo, art cloth, gilt,
3s. 6d.

Public Opinion.—"This novel is a daring attack. The author, whoever he may be,
is a clever writer, and the pictures of the seamy side of idle London life are described by
him with vivid power."

The Outlook.—"Something wrong-headed, sensual, and Corellian is anticipated, nor
is one disappointed. . . . Bound to command the public."

Christian World.—"A pungent, cleverly-written, and altogether out-of-the-common-
run Society novel. The author unsparingly exposes the 'little ways' of smart people. . . .
Every sane reader will wish the author success in his efforts to expose the hollowness and
rotteness of 'aristocratic virtuous London.'"

The North Star.—"The book is of a most daring character, but the author has
treated his theme in a very clever manner. . . . Messrs W. H. Smith & Son refuse to
circulate 'Shams,' objecting to it on moral grounds. This act on their part, however,
will not greatly interfere with the sale of the book, which really castigates vice. We
believe it will be as widely read as the works of Ouida and Marie Corelli."

Romance of a Harem. Translated from the
French of "Dans L'ombre du Harem" by CLARENCE FORESTIER-
WALKER. Crown 8vo, art vellum, 5s.

The Idealist. A Realistic *Roman-a-clef*. By GROVE
JOHNSON. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

Zoroastro. An Historical Romance. By CRESWICK J.
THOMPSON, Author of "Poison Romance and Poison Mysteries,"
"The Mystery and Romance of Alchemy and Pharmacy," etc.
Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s.

To-day.—"There is no lack of excitement in 'Zoroastro.' The tale is a good one, and
should be popular."

St James's Gazette.—"A sound and entertaining piece of work."

Universe.—"A splendidly-written romance of a sixteenth-century magician, and there
is no lack of interest throughout the book. The various ideas of the time, descriptions
of the customs and modes of living, are cleverly woven into the story."

The Sword of Fate. An Interesting Novel. By HENRY HERMAN, Author of "Eagle Joe," "Scarlet Fortune," etc., and Joint Author of the "Silver King," "Claudian." Crown 8vo, art cloth, 6s.

Vanity Fair says:—"The hand that wrote the 'Silver King' has by no means lost its cunning in painting broad effects of light and shadow. The description of life in Broadmoor is, we fancy, done from actual observation. It is quite new." And the critic of **Black and White** sums it up pithily as "A story which holds our attention and interests us right from the first chapter. The book is as exciting as even a story of sensation has any need to be." Speaking of the scene of Mr Herman's drama, the beautiful county of Devonshire, where the greater part of the story takes place, the **Manchester Courier** says: "The author's descriptive powers vividly portray the lovely spots by the winding Tamar, while the rich dialect of the district is so faithfully reproduced as to become not the least feature of an exciting tale."

Outrageous Fortune. Being the Confessions of Evelyn Gray, Hospital Nurse. A Story founded on fact, proving that truth is stranger than fiction. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

Liverpool Review.—"A smart, anonymous novel. The story is capitally written, and is extremely interesting. Evelyn Gray's adventures are narrated in a style so realistic as to leave the impression that the writer is either a medical man or one who has had very intimate acquaintance with hospital life."

Lloyd's.—"A strong book, and one that readers will find interesting. It is undoubtedly clever and well written."

Daily Graphic.—"The characters are cleverly drawn, and the revelations of hospital life, of private nursing, and of the manners and customs of the 'celibate' clergy should ensure the volume considerable popularity."

Seven Nights with Satan. A Novel. By J. L. OWEN, Author of "The Great Jekyll Diamond." Cover designed by W. S. ROGERS. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

St James's Gazette.—"We have read the book from start to finish with unflagging interest—an interest, by the way, which derives nothing from the 'spice,' for though its title may be suggestive of Zolaism, there is not a single passage which is open to objection. The literary style is good."

Truth.—"I much prefer the ghastly story 'Seven Nights with Satan,' a very clever study of degeneration."

The Green Passion. The Study of a Jealous Soul. A Powerful Novel. By ANTHONY P. VERT. Cover designed by ALFRED PRAGA. Crown 8vo, art cloth, 3s. 6d.

Mr DOUGLAS SLADEN in **The Queen**.—"A remarkably clever book. . . . There is no disputing the ability with which the writer handles her subject. I say *her* subject, because the minuteness of the touches, and the odd, forcible style in which this book is written, point to it being the work of a female hand. The book is an eminently readable one, and it is never dull for a minute."

The Monitor.—"A wonderful piece of writing. The only modern parallel we can find is supplied in Mr F. C. Philipps's 'As in a Looking Glass.'"

Whitehall Review.—"In 'The Green Passion' the author traces with much ability, and not a little analytical insight, the progress of jealousy in the breast of a woman who is born with a very 'intense,' although not a very deep, nature. . . . There is in Mr Vert's work a certain tendency towards realism which has its due effect in making his characters real. They are no loosely-built fancies of the journalistic brain, but portraits—almost snapshot portraits—of men and women of to-day."

An Idol of Bronze. An Exciting Novel of Life in Western America. By LOUISE PALMER HEAVEN, Author of "Chata and Chinita?" Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

Our Lady of the Ice. An Interesting Story of Alpine Adventure. By Miss CONSTANCE SUTCLIFFE. Crown 8vo, ornamental cloth, 6s.

Madonna Mia, and other Stories. By CLEMENT SCOTT, Author of "The Wheel of Life," "Sisters by the Sea," etc. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

Punch.—"Madonna Mia" is genuinely interesting. All the stories are good; you are 'Scott free' to pick 'em where you like." (The Baron de B. W.)

Weekly Sun.—"Shows Mr Scott's sturdy character-painting and love of picturesque adventure."

World.—"Clement Scott is nothing if not sympathetic, and every one of the ten stories is not only thoroughly readable, but is instinct with sentiment; for Mr Scott still retains a wonderful enthusiasm, usually the attribute of youth. 'Drifting' is a very fresh and convincing narrative, founded, we understand, upon truth, and containing within a small compass the materials for a very stirring drama. 'A Cross of Heather,' too, is a charming romance, told with real pathos and feeling."

The Dolomite Cavern. An Exciting Tale of Adventure. By W. PATRICK KELLY, Author of "Schoolboys Three," etc. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

Observer.—"A story full of exciting adventure."

Saturday Review.—"The plot is ingenious, and the style pleasant."

Daily Telegraph.—"Lovers of the sensational in fiction will find abundance of congenial entertainment in Mr W. P. Kelly's new story. In the way of accessories to startling situations all is fish that comes to this ingenious author's net. The wonders of primitive nature, the marvels of latter-day science, the extravagances of human passion—all these he dexterously uses for the purpose of involving his hero in perilous scrapes from which he no less dexterously extricates him by expedients which, however far-fetched they may appear to the unimaginative, are certainly not lacking in originality of device or cleverness of construction. . . . This is a specimen incident—those which succeed it derive their special interest from the action of Röntgen rays, subterranean torrents, and devastating inundations. The book is very readable throughout, and ends happily. What more can the average novel reader wish for in holiday time?"

The Lady of the Leopard. A Powerful and Fascinating Novel. By CHAS. L'EPINE, Author of "The Devil in a Domino." A new edition. Crown 8vo, art cloth, 6s.

Public Opinion.—"A remarkable book. . . . We are plugged into a delicious and tantalising romance; incident follows incident like a panorama of exciting pictures. Fertility of imagination is everywhere apparent, and the *dénouement* is artfully concealed till it bursts upon the reader with a suddenness that fairly takes away his breath."

Liverpool Post.—"A very skilfully-constructed story, mysterious and strange, with a natural explanation suggested of all the mystery which does not spoil one's enjoyment (here follows analysis of plot). This is the bare outline of the story up to a certain point; it is impossible to convey adequately an idea of the awe-inspiring characteristics of the story. Readers can safely be recommended to turn to the book itself."

The Love Thirst of Elaine. A Powerful Novel. By JUSTIN HANNAFORD. Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s.

Miss Malevolent. A Realistic Study of Modern Life in London. By the Author of "The Hypocrite." Second edition, with a new Preface. Art cloth, 3s. 6d.

Saturday Review.—"The great novel-reading public, which found 'The Hypocrite' to its taste, will not be disappointed in the author's latest effort. The writer has a knack of character-presentation which means that his people live; he has a dramatic instinct; he is at times on the verge of real wit; he knows certain phases of literary and artistic life well; and his story is original enough to hold the interest throughout."

St James's Gazette.—"It is decidedly clever. . . . An improvement on 'The Hypocrite.' There is real power shown in the drawing of Kitty Nugent."

Scotsman.—"You don't get far into this novel—about a couple of pages—before the epigrams begin exploding and the repartee detonating, and the subtle terse and quart of wit with wit fuffuffing, like so many squibs and crackers on the Queen's Birthday; and this coruscation is kept up in a way to make your hair curl until the end of the story. . . . The author has abundant literary aptitudes, exemplified over and over again by the pages of this clever book."

GREENING & CO.'S POPULAR HALF-CROWN NOVELS

Well Printed in Large Type, and Strongly Bound in
Artistically-Designed Cloth Covers.

The Hypocrite. A Modern Realistic Novel of Oxford and London Life. By the Author of "Miss Malevolent," "From the Book Beautiful," etc., etc. Seventh Impression. Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

*** This book has been "boycotted" by Messrs Mudie and Messrs W. H. Smith & Son as being "unfit to circulate in their libraries," yet it has been praised by the press as being "a powerful sermon and a moral book."*

Daily Telegraph.—"A book by an anonymous author always arouses a certain inquiry, and when the book is clever and original the interest becomes keen, and conjecture is rife, endowing the most unlikely people with authorship. . . . It is very brilliant, very forcible, very sad. . . . It is perfect in its way, in style clear, sharp and forcible, the dialogue epigrammatic and sparkling. . . . Enough has been said to show that 'The Hypocrite' is a striking and powerful piece of work, and that its author has established his claim to be considered a writer of originality and brilliance."

The Tragedy of the Lady Palmist.

By W. LUTHER LONGSTAFF, Author of "Weeds and Flowers," etc. An exciting tale, descriptive of the "Behind-the-Scenes of the Palmist's Bohemia." Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

Literature.—"The story strikes the fresh note of having been lived, experienced, and does not come to one as a stale invention. There is human nature in it, and passion, of a kind; tragedy too. . . . We should say, 'Read the book by all means.'"

Echo.—"Its general air of out-Bourget-ing Bourget. You will 'see life' in its story, no doubt, for it has a measure of pathos, insight and power, but most certainly you will not see life steadily."

Morning Leader.—"Vivid with the strange lusts and cruel desires of an imagination enslaved to the body . . . powerful enough in the imaginative treatment of the characters. . . . The luridness is simply Titanic."

In Monte Carlo. A Tale by HENRYK SIENKIEWICZ, Author of "Quo Vadis," "With Fire and Sword," etc., etc. Translated by S. C. de SOISSONS. Crown 8vo, art cloth, with a new Portrait of the Author, 2s. 6d.

M. A. P.—"Very light and dainty in its tone. 'In Monte Carlo' is a typical example of the work of the great Polish writer. . . . It is the old, old tale of a man with a maid—plus a lady with the instincts of the vampire, who lives in the gambling hell of Europe." **Pall Mall Gazette**—"It is beyond all question the work of a great artist. It is subtly analytical and psychologically true. So triumphant is the art of the Polish novelist that we follow the story with lively sympathy and unflagging interest. . . . It is always interesting; the clear, able and convincing portrayal of the two leading characters gives the book its chief value. There are wise sayings and occasional epigrams, and the thumbnail sketches of Mrs Elsen's lovers are wholly admirable."

My Lady Ruby and John Basileon :

CHIEF OF POLICE. Two stories by G. F. MONKSHOOD, Author of "Rudyard Kipling: The Man and His Work," etc. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

Monitor.—"My Lady Ruby' is charming, and as witty as she is charming. . . . 'John Basileon' evinces imagination and subtlety of a highly vivid and intense quality. The note of the book is modern, but of a modernity far removed from that of the term understood by the French Symbolists and the English Degenerates. Messrs Greening & Co. are to be congratulated on a publication which is likely to arouse considerable attention in those literary circles from which approbation is praise indeed."

"Fame, the Fiddler." A Story of Literary and Theatrical Life. By S. J. ADAIR FITZ-GERALD. Crown 8vo, cloth, new and cheaper edition, 2s. 6d.

Graphic.—"The volume will please and amuse numberless people."

Pall Mall Gazette.—"A pleasant, cheery story. Displays a rich vein of robust imagination."

Standard.—"There are many pleasant pages in 'Fame, the Fiddler,' which reminds us of 'Tilby,' with its pictures of Bohemian life, and its happy-go-lucky group of good-hearted, generous scribblers, artists and playwrights. Some of the characters are so true to life that it is impossible not to recognise them. Among the best incidents in the volume must be mentioned the production of Pryor's play, and the account of poor Jimmy Lambert's death, which is as moving an incident as we have read for a long time. Altogether, 'Fame, the Fiddler' is a very human hook, and an amusing one as well."

Darab's Wine-Cup, and other Powerful and Vividly-Written Stories. By BART KENNEDY, Author of "The Wandering Romanoff," etc. New and cheaper Edition. Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

St James's Budget.—"A volume characteristic of the author's splendid powers."

M. A. P.—"Mr Kennedy writes powerfully, and can grip the reader's imagination, or whirl it off into the strangest domains of glamour and romance at will. . . . There is a future for this clever young man from Tipperary. He will do great things."

Critic.—"Of a highly imaginative order, and distinctly out of the ordinary run. . . . The author has a remarkable talent for imaginative and dramatic presentation. He sets before himself a higher standard of achievement than most young writers of fiction."

Gork Herald.—"Gracefully written, easy and attractive in diction and style, the stories are as choice a collection as we have happened on for a long time. They are clever; they are varied; they are fascinating. We admit them into the sacred circle of the most beautiful that have been told by the most sympathetic and skilled writers. . . . Mr Kennedy has a style, and that is rare enough nowadays—as refreshing as it is rare."

Dona Rufina. A Nineteenth Century Romance.

Being a Story of Carlist Conspiracy. By HEBER DANIELS, Author of "Our Tenants." Second Edition. Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

Lady.—"A thrilling romance with a mediæval atmosphere, although the scene is laid in the Cotswolds in the year of grace 1898. The story is well constructed, and is a good example of the widely-imaginative type of fiction that is so eagerly devoured by young people nowadays."

Eastern Morning News.—"Readers will be fascinated by the stirring scenes, the swiftly-moving panorama, the enacted tragedies, the wild, passionate, lawless loves depicted in the most sensational manner in this volume."

Lord Jimmy. A Story of Music-Hall Life. By

GEORGE MARTYN. Second Edition. Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

Outlook.—"The book is both humorous and dramatic."

Vanity Fair.—"The author has a peculiar knowledge of the 'Halls' and those who frequent them; and especially, as it seems to us, of those Jewish persons who sometimes run them. And he has made good use of his knowledge here. But there is more than this in the book; for 'George Martyn' has considerable descriptive talent. His account, for instance, of the fight between the hero and the butcher is quite good. The story is straightforward, convincing, and full of human nature and promise."

The Wandering Romanoff. A Romance. By

BART KENNEDY, Author of "A Man Adrift," "Darab's Wine-Cup," etc. New and Cheaper Edition, crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

The Outlook.—"Mr Bart Kennedy, a young writer of singular imaginative gifts, and a style as individual as Mr Kipling's. . . . The writing of this story is strongly original in manner. . . . A powerful book."

Weekly Times.—"The Wandering Romanoff' is really good work. . . . We have read nothing finer for a long while."

A Tragedy of Grub Street. By S. J. ADAIR

FITZ-GERALD, Author of "Fame the Fiddler." A new and cheaper edition of this popular book, cloth, 2s. 6d.

The Gates of Temptation. A Natural Novel by

Mrs ALBERT S. BRADSHAW, Author of "False Gods," "Wife or Slave," etc. Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

Midland Mail.—"The characters are vividly drawn. There are many pleasant and painful incidents in the book, which is interesting from beginning to end."

Aberdeen Free Press.—"Mrs Bradshaw has written several good novels, and the outstanding feature of all of them has been her skilful development of plot, and her tasteful, pleasing style. In connection with the present story we are able to amply reiterate those praises. The plot again is well developed and logically carried out, while the language used by the authoress is always happy and well chosen, and never commonplace. . . . The story is a very powerful one indeed, and may be highly commended as a piece of painstaking fiction of the very highest kind."

Mad ? An Exciting Story of Predestination. By J.

PYM LOUGHNAN. Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

Evening Times.—"We must congratulate Mr Loughnan on his originality in conceiving an extraordinary character, and on working out the story with quite blood-curdling thrill."

Glasgow Herald.—"If the leading idea of the story is a little exaggerated, there can be no doubt as to the skill with which the author has worked out the details."

The Lady of Criswold. A Sensational Story. By

LEONARD OUTRAM. Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

North British Advertiser.—"A thrilling tale of love and madness."

Whitehall Review.—"No one can complain of lack of sensation, it is full of startling episodes. The characters are drawn with a rapid and vigorous touch. The interest is well maintained."

Court Circular.—"It reminds us forcibly of a story in real life that engrossed public attention many years ago. Whether this was in the author's mind we cannot say, but the book is deeply interesting, the characters well and strongly drawn, and we doubt not this tale will fascinate many a reader."

The Resurrection of His Grace. Being the

very candid Confessions of the Honourable BERTIE BEAUCLERC.

A Sporting Novel. By CAMPBELL RAE-BROWN, Author of

"The Shadow on the Manse." Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

Scotsman.—"The book is lightly and briskly written throughout. Its pleasant cynicism is always entertaining."

St James's Budget.—"A sporting romance which is indisputably cleverly written. . . . The book is full of interesting items of sporting life which are fascinating to lovers of the turf."

Sporting Life.—"The character of the heartless *roué*, who tells his story, is very well sustained, and the rich *parvenu*, Peter Drewitt, the owner of the favourite that is very nearly nobbled by the unscrupulous Beauclerc, is cleverly drawn. Altogether it is an exciting and an uncommon tale, and is quite correct in all the sporting details."

Anna Marsden's Experiment. An Interesting

Novel. By ELLEN WILLIAMS. Crown 8vo, art cloth, 2s. 6d.

Outlook.—"A good story cleverly told and worked out."

Echo.—"A very natural and interesting tale is carefully set forth in Ellen Williams's clever little book."

Monitor.—"Miss Williams has here seized on an original concept, and given it fitting presentation. The 'experiment' is a novel one, and its working out is a deft piece of writing. The psychology of the work is faultless, and this study of a beautiful temperament, in a crude frame, has with it the verity of deep observation and acute insight. . . . We await with considerable confidence Miss Williams's next venture."

Sheffield Independent.—"The writer has treated a delicate and unusual situation with delicacy and originality. The heroine's character is drawn with firmness and clearness, and the whole story is vivid and picturesque. . . . The history of the experiment is exceedingly well told. Keen insight into character, and cleverness in its delineation, as well as shrewd observation and intense sympathy, mark the writer's work, while the style is terse and clear, and the management of trying scenes extremely good."

Farthest South. Being an account of the Startling

Discovery made by the Wise Antarctic Expedition. A Humorous

Story. By HAROLD E. GORST, Author of "Without Bloodshed,"

"Sketches of the Future," etc. Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

Daily Graphic.—"Very easy, light reading, and reminds one of 'Three Men in a Boat.' Just the book for a railway journey."

Bookman.—"A lively and very amusing tale of a wonderful discovery made by the Wise Antarctic Expedition."

Glasgow Herald.—"An amusing skit on Polar expeditions. . . . The book contains plenty of fun."

Whitehall Review.—"It is an amusing book, worth reading by those who are on the lookout for a hearty laugh."

Vanity Fair.—"An amusing little book. It is very good fooling, and good fooling is sometimes better than heavy wisdom."

20 Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, London, W.C.

An Uncanny Girl. A Story. By MARIE M. SADLEIR,
Author of "Such is the Law," etc. Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

Daily Telegraph.—"A remarkable tale. The narrative teems with surprises. . . . There is plenty of 'go' in 'An Uncanny Girl.'"
Sir EDWARD RUSSELL says in **Liverpool Post**:—"A very clever and subtle story. . . . The action is exciting, and the invention of incidents adroit. But beyond this popular merit there is that of clever and characteristic description. . . . Mrs Sadleir is ingenious as a story-teller, and vigorous and pungent as a writer."

The Cigarette Smoker. A Powerful and
Daring Story. By the Author of "The Hypocrite." Crown
8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

CHEAPER FICTION

The Derelict and Tommy. By the Author of
"Twixt the Devil and the Deep Sea." Cloth, top edge gilt, 2s.

Graphic.—"A simple story invested with an unusual distinction and charm."

Glasgow Times.—"A capital tale. Entertaining reading."

Nottingham Guardian.—"A romance which holds one's interest enthralled."

Literary World.—"The story has a frank directness and a reality that make it thoroughly readable. . . . The story is well expressed and the characters have vitality. Altogether a satisfactory little tale."

Daily Telegraph.—"The story is out of the common, both in manner and treatment."

Lloyd's.—"Clear and brilliant."

The Black Tulip. ALEXANDRE DUMAS'S Celebrated
Romance. Translated by S. ADAIR FITZ-GERALD. Illustrated
with Portraits. 260 pp. Crown 8vo, cloth, gilt top, 2s.

Pelican Tails. A Collection of smart, up-to-date Tales
of Modern Life, written, edited and selected by FRANK M. BOYD
(Editor of "The Pelican.") One of the most popular and enter-
taining volumes of short stories that has ever been published. An
ideal companion for a railway journey or a spare hour or two.
Demy 8vo, picture wrapper designed and drawn by W. S. ROGERS,
1s.

The Devil in a Domino. A Psychological Mystery.
By CHAS. L'EPINE, Author of "The Lady of the Leopard,"
"Miracle Plays," etc. Long 12mo, cloth, 1s.

Truth.—"The story is written with remarkable literary skill, and, notwithstanding its
gruesomeness, is undeniably fascinating."

Sketch.—"It is a well-written story. An admirable literary style, natural and concise
construction, succeed in compelling the reader's attention through every line. We hope
to welcome the author again, working on a larger scene."

Shadows. A Series of Side Lights on Modern Society.

By ERNEST MARTIN. (Dedicated to Sir Henry Irving.) Crown 8vo, art cloth, gilt tops, 2s.

Western Mercury.—"Clever sketches, intensely dramatic, original and forceful, based on scenes from actual life, and narrated with much skill."

Weekly Times.—"A series of pictures sketched with considerable power. The last one, 'Hell in Paradise,' is terrible in the probable truth of conception."

Northern Figaro.—"Mr Martin's descriptive paragraphs are couched in trenchant, convincing language, without a superfluous word sandwiched in anywhere."

'Shadows' may be read with much profit, and will give more than a superficial insight into various phases of society life and manners."

Death and the Woman. A Powerful Tale. By

ARNOLD GOLSWORTHY. Picture cover drawn by SYDNEY H. SIME. Crown 8vo, 1s.

Literary World.—"We do not remember having read a book that possessed the quality of *grip* in a greater degree than is the case with 'Death and the Woman.' . . . Every page of every chapter develops the interest, which culminates in one of the most sensational *dénouements* it has been our lot to read. The flavour of actuality is not destroyed by any incredible incident; it is the inevitable thing that always happens. 'Death and the Woman' will supply to the brim the need of those in search of a holding drama of modern London life."

The Fellow-Passengers. A Mystery and its

Solution. A Detective Story. By RIVINGTON PYKE, Author of "The Man who Disappeared." Long 12mo, cloth, 1s.

Whitehall Review.—"Those who love a mystery with plenty of 'go,' and a story which is not devoid of a certain amount of realism, cannot do better than pick up 'Fellow-Passengers.' The characters are real men and women, and not the sentimental and artificial puppets to which we have been so long accustomed by our sensationalists. The book is brightly written, and of detective stories it is the best I have read lately."

That Fascinating Widow, and other Frivolous

and Fantastic Tales, for River, Road and Rail. By S. J. ADAIR. FITZ-GERALD. Long 12mo, cloth, 1s.

The Referee.—"Another little humorous book is 'That Fascinating Widow,' by Mr S. J. Adair Fitz-Gerald, who can be very funny when he tries. The story which gives the title to the book would make a capital farce. 'The Blue-blooded Coster' is an amusing piece of buffoonery."

The Globe.—"The author, Mr S. J. Adair Fitz-Gerald, has already shown himself to be the possessor of a store of humour, on which he has again drawn for the furnishing of the little volume he has just put together. Among the tales included are several which might be suitable for reading or recitation, and none which are dull. Mr Fitz-Gerald frankly addresses himself to that portion of the public which desires nothing so much as to be amused, and likes even its amusements in small doses. Such a public will entertain itself very pleasantly with Mr Fitz-Gerald's lively tales, and will probably name as its favourites those titled 'Pure Cussedness,' 'Splidgings' First Baby,' and 'The Blue-blooded Coster.'"

Rip Van Winkle, together with "THE LEGEND OF

SLEEPY HOLLOW." By WASHINGTON IRVING. Illustrated with Drawings by W. G. MEIN. Crown 8vo, art cloth, decorative cover by WILL SMART, top edge gilt, 2s.

Illustrated Books for Children

The Grand Panjandrum, and other fanciful Fairy Tales for the youthful of all Ages, Climes and Times. By S. J. ADAIR FITZ-GERALD, Author of "The Zankiwank and the Bletherwitch," etc. Many full-page and smaller Illustrations by GUSTAVE DARRÉ. Second Edition. Square 8vo, art cloth, gilt, 3s. 6d.

Truth.—"A decided acquisition to the children's library."

Ladies' Pictorial.—"Quite one of the brightest of the season's gift books."

Morning Post.—"Bright and thoroughly amusing. It will please all children. The pictures are excellent."

Echo.—"Of the pile (of children's books) before us, Mr Adair Fitz-Gerald's 'Grand Panjandrum' is the cleverest. Mr Fitz-Gerald needs no introduction to the nursery of these days."

Pall Mall Gazette.—"A charming little book. Simply written, and therefore to be comprehended of the youthful mind. It will be popular, for the writer has a power of pleasing which is rare."

Literary World.—"A handsomely-bound, mouth-watering, in every way up-to-date volume, written especially for and on behalf of the toddler or the newly breeched."

People.—"A delightful story for children, something in the style of 'Alice in Wonderland,' but also having some flavour of Kipling's 'Water Babies.'"

Sun.—"Good fairy stories are a source of everlasting joy and delight. Mr Adair Fitz-Gerald breaks fresh ground and writes pleasantly. . . . The book has the added advantage of being charmingly illustrated in colour by Gustave Doré."

Weekly Sun.—"Mr Adair Fitz-Gerald is a well-known writer of fairy stories and humorous books for the young. 'The Grand Panjandrum' is just the sort of book to please youngsters of all ages, being full of pleasant imaginings, and introducing its readers to a host of curious people."

Nonsense Numbers and Jocular Jingles

FOR FUNNY LITTLE FOLK. Written by DRUID GRAYL, with full-page Illustrations by WALTER J. MORGAN. 4to, cloth boards, 3s. 6d.

St James's Gazette.—"Full of quaint pictures, which will delight and amuse the little folks."

Record.—"A really witty book. Just the sort of nonsense that appeals to little folk, and the pictures are quite laughable. There is an abundance of really good humour to be got from these pages, which are altogether free from vulgarity."

World.—"Appeals directly to children, and would make a delightful present for any little boy or girl."

Daily Telegraph.—"Will be productive of many a happy half-hour."

Lloyd's Newspaper.—"A very amusing book indeed is this volume of nonsense verse. The jingles are excellent and such as children delight in, while the pictures are also ludicrously funny."

Greening's Humorous Books

The Pittypingle Pastorals. A Series of Amusing

Rustic Tales and Sketches. By DRUID GRAYL. Profusely Illustrated by WALTER J. MORGAN. Crown 8vo, art cloth, 3s. 6d.

Vanity Fair.—"Most certainly entertaining, and readers will enjoy it. It is well illustrated."

Scotsman.—"A lively book of comical yarns. It is frivolous, doubtless, but it is funny, and any reader will like it who enjoys a hearty laugh."

Outlook.—"The stories are well told, and tend to provoke laughter."

Phoenix.—"A delightful collection of stories. There is something refreshing and invigorating about them."

Literary World.—"An amusing bit of humour."

Midland Mail.—"A budget of fun, and good fun too. There is not a dull page in it."

The Pottle Papers. Written by TRISTRAM COUTTS,

Author of "A Comedy of Temptation." Illustrated by L. RAVEN HILL. Fourth Edition. Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

Sheffield Daily Telegraph.—"Anyone who wants a good laugh should get 'The Pottle Papers.' They are very droll reading for an idle afternoon, or picking up at any time when 'down in the dumps.' They are very brief and very bright, and it is impossible for anyone with the slightest sense of humour to read the book without bursting into 'the loud guffaw' which does not always 'bespeak the empty mind.'"

Pall Mall Gazette.—"It contains plenty of hoisterous humour of the Max Adeler kind . . . humour that is genuine and spontaneous. The author, for all his antics, has a good deal more in him than the average buffoon. There is, for example, a very clever and subtle strain of feeling running through the comedy in 'The Love that Burned'—a rather striking bit of work. Mr Raven Hill's illustrations are as amusing as they always are."

The Pottle's Progress. Being the Further Adven-

tures of Mr and Mrs Pottle. By TRISTRAM COUTTS, Author of "The Pottle Papers," etc. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. (In preparation.)

Dan Leno, Hys Booke. A Volume of Frivoli-

ties: Autobiographical, Historical, Philosophical, Anecdotal and Nonsensical. Written by DAN LENO. Profusely illustrated by Popular Artists. Seventh Edition. Crown 8vo, art cloth, gilt edges, 1s. 6d. Popular Edition, sewed, picture cover, 6d.

DAN LENO, HYS BOOKE, is, says the **Liverpool Review**, "the funniest publication since 'Three Men in a Boat.' In this autobiographical masterpiece the inimitable King of Comedians tells his life story in a style that would make a shrimp laugh."

This enormously successful book of genuine and spontaneous humour has been received with a complete chorus of complimentary criticisms and pleasing "Press" praise and approval. Here are a few reviewers' remarks:—

Scotsman.—"Bombshells of fun."

Lloyd's.—"One long laugh from start to finish."

Globe.—"Full of exuberant and harmless fun."

English Illustrated Magazine.—"A deliciously humorous volume."

Catholic Times.—"The fun is fast and furious."

St Paul's.—"It is very funny."

These are a few opinions taken at random from hundreds of notices.

Says the **Daily News** (Hull):—"The funniest book we have read for some time. You must perforce scream with huge delight at the dry sayings and writings of the funny little man who has actually killed people with his patter and his antics. Page after page of genuine fun is reeled off by the great little man."

Bachelor Ballads and other Lazy Lyrics. By

HARRY A. SPURR, Author of "A Cockney in Arcadia." With Fifty Illustrations by JOHN HASSALL. Crown 8vo, art cloth, 3s. 6d.

St James's Gazette.—"Distinctly clever."

Globe.—"Mr Spurr goes in for humour, and with very considerable success. . . . Altogether he is as funny as he is fluent. Mr Hassall's illustrations are also genuinely comic."

Nottingham Guardian.—"The fun is genuine and hearty."

Weekly Sun.—"These 'Bachelor Ballads' are excellent fun."

Literary World.—"The book is good from beginning to end, and its excellent illustrations by John Hassall are fittingly humorous."

Sheffield Independent.—"It is a rare thing to find humour in rhyme without vulgarity, and fun without feebleness. One is, as-a rule, inclined to laugh too rarely with the joking poet, and sigh often at the pith of his hideous staleness. Mr Spurr is the exception. His unostentatious rhymes abound in neat literary turns, brim with good humour, and jig to a natural sprightliness. He can pass, too, the test of persistent punning without causing the gorge of the reader to rise. In brief, he is a really humorous versifier, and the illustrator of his work has happily caught his spirit. A man who can turn out in thirty-two lines twenty-five puns on cricket, and work in a love story too, may be regarded as having shouldered the mantle of Hood."

That Fascinating Widow. By S. J. A. FITZ-

GERALD. Cloth, 1s. (*For particulars see page 26.*)

Farthest South. A Humorous Story. By HAROLD

E. GORST. 2s. 6d. (*For particulars see page 24.*)

Guides, Etc.**London.** A Handy Guide for the Visitor, Sportsman and

Naturalist. By J. W. CUNDALL. Numerous Illustrations. Fourth Year of Publication. Long 12mo, cloth, 6d.

Vanity Fair.—"A capital little guide book. No bulky volume this, but a handy booklet full of pithy information on all the most important subjects connected with our great city."

Outlook.—"A handy booklet; more tasteful than one is accustomed to."

Pelican.—"As full of useful and entertaining information as is an egg of meat."

Bookman.—"A very lively and readable little guide."

To-day.—"One of the best guide books for visitors to London. It is a model of lucidity and informativeness, and the profuse illustrations are admirably executed."

Glasgow Herald.—"A useful little work for those who have no desire to wade through many pages of information before getting what they want."

America Abroad. A Handy Guide for Americans in

England. Edited by J. W. CUNDALL. With Map and numerous Illustrations. Eleventh Year of Publication. 6d.

In Quaint East Anglia. Descriptive Sketches.

By T. WEST CARNIE. Illustrated by W. S. ROGERS. Long 12mo, cloth, 1s. (See page 8.)

"Sisters by the Sea." Seaside and Country Sketches

By CLEMENT SCOTT, Author of "Blossom Land," "Amongst the Apple Orchards," Etc. Frontispiece and Vignette designed by GEORGE POWNALL. Long 12mo, attractively bound in cloth, 1s. (See page 4.)

INDEX

	PAGE		PAGE
ADAMS, H. A Virtue of Necessity, . . .	17	Colomba. (Prosper Merimée), . . .	11
Alexander, George. Introduction to Art of Elocution, . . .	6	Corelli, Marie. Patriotism or Self-Advertisement? . . .	7
After-Taste, The. (Compton Reade), . . .	14	Coutts, T. The Pottle Papers, . . .	28
America Abroad. (J. W. Cundall), . . .	29	Coutts, T. A Comedy of Temptation, . . .	16
Ames, H. The Tragedy of a Pedigree, . . .	13	Croly, George. Salathiel, . . .	11
Anna Marsden's Experiment. (E. Williams), . . .	24	Cry in the Night, A. (A. Golsworthy), . . .	17
— And Afterwards. (Mrs H. E. Gorst), . . .	17	Cundall, J. W. London, . . .	29
Apollo, Ideal Physical Culture, . . .	7	Cundall, J. W. America Abroad, . . .	29
Asia, A Vagabond in. (E. Candler), . . .	11	Cynthia's Damages. (E. Turner), . . .	15
Asmodeus. (Le Sage), . . .	11		
"Esculapius." The Magnetism of Sin, . . .	14	DAN LENO, Hys Booke. (Dan Leno), . . .	28
Ascher, Isidore. A Social Upheaval, . . .	17	Daniels, Heber. Dona Rufina, . . .	23
Ashes Tell no Tales. (Mrs A. S. Bradshaw), . . .	16	Daughters of Pleasure. (De Brémont), . . .	14
		Darah's Wine-Cup. (Bart Kennedy), . . .	22
BARTRAM, George. Ballads of Ghostly Shires, . . .	9	Daudet, Sapho, . . .	18
Bachelor Ballads. (Harry A. Spurr), . . .	29	Dead Woman's Vow, A. (Emile Zola), . . .	18
Beckford, W. Vathek, . . .	11	Death and the Woman. (Golsworthy), . . .	26
Black Tulip, The. (Alexandre Dumas), . . .	11 and 25	De Brémont, Comtesse. A Son of Africa, . . .	15
Boyd, F. M. Pelican Tails, . . .	25	De Brémont, Comtesse. Daughters of Pleasure, . . .	14
Book of the Poster, A. (W. S. Rogers), . . .	5	De Brémont, Comtesse. The Gentleman Digger, . . .	15
Book Beautiful, From the, . . .	7	De Soissons, Count. The Path of the Soul, . . .	6
Bradshaw, Mrs A. S. Ashes Tell no Tales, . . .	16	Derelict and Tommy, The. (C. Forestier-Walker), . . .	25
Bradshaw, Mrs A. S. Gates of Temptation; The, . . .	23	Detached Pirate, A. (Helen Millicote), . . .	13
Bye-Ways of Crime. (R. J. Power-Berrey), . . .	6	Devil in a Domino, The. (C. L'Epine), . . .	25
		Dona Rufina. (Heber Daniels), . . .	23
CANDLER, E. A Vagabond in Asia, . . .	4	Downing, C. Messiahship of Shakespeare, . . .	4
Carnie, T. W. In Quaint East Anglia, . . .	8	Downing, C. God in Shakespeare, . . .	5
Clelia. Messiahship of Shakespeare, The, . . .	4	Dolomite Cavern, The. (W. Kelly), . . .	20
Clelia. God in Shakespeare, . . .	5	Dress in a Nutshell. ("R."), . . .	9
Cigarette Smoker, The. (Author of "The Hypocrite"), . . .	25	Dumas. The Black Tulip, . . .	11 and 25
Comedy of Temptation, A. (T. Coutts), . . .	16		
Committed to His Charge. (Kate and Robina Lizars), . . .	13	EAST ANGLIA, In Quaint. (Carnie), . . .	8
		"English Writers of To-day" Series—	
		Rudyard Kipling. (G. F. Monks- hood), . . .	1
		Bret Harte. (T. E. Pemberton), . . .	2
		Swinburne. (Theodore Wratistlaw), . . .	2

	PAGE		PAGE
"English Writers of To-Day"— <i>cont'd.</i>		Harem, Romance of a,	18
George Meredith. (Walter Jerrold),	2	Heaven, Louise P. An Idol of	
Hall Caine. (C. Fred. Kenyon),	2	Bronze,	20
A. W. Pinero. (Hamilton Pyffe),	2	Herman, H. The Sword of Fate,	19
W. E. Henley. (George Gamble),	2	Hewitt, E. Prettiness of Fools,	14
Mrs Humphry Ward, } in one		Hypocrite, The. (Anonymous),	21
Mrs Craigie, } volume.		Hypocrite, The. (Author of "Miss	
(W. L. Courtney),	3	Malevolent"),	21
Thomas Hardy,	3	Hypocrite, The. (Author of "From	
Realistic Writers of To-day. (J.		the Book Beautiful"),	7
Hannaford),	3	Hypocrite, The. (Author of "His	
The Parnassian School in English		Grace's Grace"),	13
Poetry. (Sir G. Douglas),	3	Hypocrite, The. (Author of "The	
Richard Le Gallienne. (Ranger		Cigarette Smoker"),	25
Gull),	3		
Elocution, The Art of. (R. Ferguson),	7	IDEAL PHYSICAL CULTURE. (Apollo),	7
Epicurean, The. (Thomas Moore),	11	Idealist, The. Grove Johnson),	18
Escott, T. H. S. A Trip to Paradoxia,	6	Idol of Bronze. (L. P. Heaven),	20
Exile in Bohemia, An. (Ernest E.		In Monte Carlo. (H. Sienkiewicz),	22
Williams),	12	In the World of Mimes. (L. Melville),	15
"FAME, the Fiddler." (S. J. Adair		In Quaint East Anglia. (T. W.	
Fitz-Gerald),	22	Carnie),	8
Farthest South. (H. G. Gorst),	24	Ira Lorraine. (Coralie Fevez),	16
Ferguson, Ross. The Art of Elocution,	6	Irving, Washington. Rip Van Winkle,	10
Ferreira, A. J. Nebo,	7		
Fevez, Coralie. Ira Lorraine,	16	JOHN BASILEON. (See "My Lady	
Fellow-Passengers, The. (R. Pyke),	26	Ruby"),	22
Fitz-Gerald, S. J. A. A Tragedy of		Johnson, Dr. Rasselas,	10
Grub Street,	23	Johnson, Grove. The Idealist,	18
Fitz-Gerald, S. J. A. The Grand			
Panjandrum,	27	KELLY, W. P. The Dolomite Cavern,	20
Fitz-Gerald, S. J. A. That Fascinat-		Kennedy, Bart. A Man Adrift,	8
ing Widow,	27	Kennedy, Bart. Darab's Wine-Cup,	22
Fitz-Gerald, S. J. A. Fame, the		Kennedy, Bart. The Wanderlog	
Fiddler,	22	Romanoff,	23
Forbes, Edmund. Red Fate,	13		
For Himself Alone. (T. W. Speight),	15	LADY OF CRISWOLD, The. (L. Outram),	24
Forestier-Walker, C. The Derelict		Lady of the Leopard, The. (C.	
and Tommy,	25	L'Epine),	20
Fouillée, Alfred. Woman,	5	Le Sage. Asmodeus,	11
France, Anatole. Thais,	18	Leno, D. Dan Leno, Hys Booke,	28
From the Book Beautiful. (Author of		L'Epice, C. The Devil in a Domino,	25
"The Hypocrite"),	7	L'Epine, C. The Lady of the Leopard,	20
		Leyken, N. Where the Oranges Grow,	13
GALT, J. Ringan Gilhaize,	10	Lizars, K. and R. Committed to His	
Gates of Temptation, The. (Mrs A.		Charge,	13
Bradshaw),	23	Longstaff, W. L. Weeds and Flowers,	9
Gentleman Digger, The. (Comtesse		Longstaff, W. L. The Tragedy of the	
de Brémont),	15	Lady Palmist,	21
Girl of the North, The. (H. Milecete),	12	London. (J. W. Cundall),	29
God in Shakspeare. (C. Downing),	5	Loughnan, J. Pym. Mad?	23
Gorton, Lieut.-Col. The Maori War,	6	Love Thirst of Elaine, The. (J.	
Gorst, H. E. Farthest South,	24	Hannaford),	20
Gorst, Mrs H. — And Afterwards,	17	Lord Jimmy. (G. Martyn),	23
Golsworthy, A. Death and the			
Woman,	26	MAD? (J. Pym Loughnan),	23
Golsworthy, A. A Cry in the Night,	17	Madonna Mia. C. Scott),	20
Grand Panjandrum, The. (S. J. A.		Mao Adrift, A. (B. Kennedy),	8
Fitz-Gerald),	27	Magnetism of Sin, The. ("Escula-	
Green, Percy B. A History of Nursery		pianus"),	14
Rhymes,	10	Maori War, The. (Lt.-Col. E. Gorton),	6
Green Passion, The. (A. P. Vert),	19	Martin, E. Shadows,	26
Gray, Druid. Nonsense Numbers		Martyn, G. Lord Jimmy,	23
and Jocular Jingles,	27	Mayne Reid, Captain. (Mrs M. Reid),	4
Gray, Druid. Pillypingle Pastorals,	28	M'Millan, A. The Weir Well,	16
Guides, etc.,	29	Messiahship of Shakspeare, The.	
		(Clelia),	4
HAMLETS, Some Notable. (C. Scott),	3	Merimée, P. Colomba,	11
Hannaford, Justin. The Love Thirst		Melville, L. In the World of Mimes,	15
of Elaine,	20		

	PAGE		PAGE
Miss Malevolent. (Author of "The Hypocrite"), . . .	21	Scott, C. Sisters by the Sea, . . .	4
Milecete, H. A Girl of the North, . . .	12	Seed, Rev. T. A. Woman, . . .	5
Milecete, H. A Detached Pirate, . . .	13	Seekers of Sentiment, . . .	14
Mora, (T. W. Speight), . . .	15	Seven Nights with Satao. (J. L. Owen), . . .	19
Moore, Thomas. The Epicurean, . . .	11	Shadow on the Manse, The. (Rae-Brown), . . .	17
Modern Argonauts, The. (Eliza Orzeszko), . . .	12	Shadows. (E. Martin), . . .	26
Monkshood, G. F. Rudyard Kipling, . . .	1	Shams! (Anonymous), . . .	18
Monkshood, G. F. My Lady Ruby, . . .	22	Sienkiewicz, H. In Monte Carlo, . . .	22
Monkshood, G. F. Woman and the Wits, . . .	9	Social Upheaval, A. (I. G. Ascher), . . .	17
My Lady Ruby. (G. F. Monkshood), . . .	22	Son of Africa, A. (De Brémont), . . .	15
NEBO. (A. J. Ferreira), . . .	7	Speight, T. W. Mora, . . .	15
Nonsense Numbers and Jocular Jingles. (Druid Grayl), . . .	27	Speight, T. W. Two Days in a Life-time, . . .	15
Northern Lights and Shadows. (R. G. Taber), . . .	5	Speight, T. W. For Himself Alone, . . .	15
Nursery Rhymes, A History of. (P. B. Green), . . .	8	Spurr, H. Bachelor Ballads, . . .	29
OBSCURE APOSTLE, AN. (Madame Orzeszko), . . .	12	Stage, The Year Book of the. (L. A. Greening), . . .	7
Orzeszko, Madame. The Modern Argonauts, . . .	12	Such is the Law. (Sadleir, Mrs.), . . .	10
Orzeszko, Madame. An Obscure Apostle, . . .	12	Sutcliffe, Constance. Our Lady of the Ice, . . .	20
Our Lady of the Ice. (Constance Sutcliffe), . . .	20	Sword of Fate, The. (H. Herman), . . .	19
Outrageous Fortune. (Anonyms), . . .	19	TABER, R. G. Northern Lights and Shadows, . . .	5
Ontram, L. The Lady of Criswold, . . .	24	Thais. (Anatole France), . . .	18
Owen, J. L. Seven Nights with Satan, . . .	19	That Fascinating Widow. (S. J. A. Fitz-Gerald), . . .	26
PATH OF THE SOUL, The. (De Soissons), . . .	6	Thompson, C. J. S. Zoroastro, . . .	18
Patriotism or Self-Advertisement? (Marie Corelli), . . .	7	Tragedy of Grub Street, A. (S. J. Adair Fitz-Gerald), . . .	23
Pemberton, T. E. Bret Harte, . . .	2	Tragedy of a Pedigree, The. (Hugo Ames), . . .	13
Pelican Tails. (F. M. Boyd), . . .	25	Tragedy of the Lady Palmist, The. (W. L. Longstaff), . . .	21
Physical Culture, Ideal. (Apollo), . . .	7	Trip to Paradoxia, A. (T. H. Escott), . . .	6
Pillypingle Pastorals. (Druid Grayl), . . .	28	Two Days in a Life-time. (T. Speight), . . .	15
Pottle Papers. (T. Countts), . . .	28	Turner, R. Cynthia's Damages, . . .	15
Poster, A Book of the. (W. S. Rogers), . . .	5	UNCANNY GIRL, AN. (Mrs Sadleir), . . .	25
Power of the Past, The. (Daisy Pryce), . . .	14	Upperton, R. Village Life and Feeling, . . .	10
Power-Berrey, R. J. Bye-Ways of Crime, . . .	6	VAGABOND IN ASIA, A. (E. Candler), . . .	4
Prettiness of Fools, The. (E. Hewitt), . . .	14	Vathek. (W. Beckford), . . .	11
Pyke, R. The Fellow-Passengers, . . .	26	Vert, A. P. The Green Passion, . . .	19
Pryce, Daisy Hughes. The Power of the Past, . . .	14	Village Life and Feeling. (Rupert Uppington), . . .	10
RAE-BROWN, C. The Shadow on the Manse, . . .	17	Virtue of Necessity, A. (H. Adams), . . .	17
Rae-Brown, C. The Resurrection of His Grace, . . .	24	WANDERING ROMANOFF, The. (Bart Kennedy), . . .	23
Rasselas. (Dr Johnson), . . .	10	Weeds and Flowers. (W. Longstaff), . . .	9
Reade, C. The After-Taste, . . .	14	Weird Well, The. (Alec M'Millan), . . .	16
Red Fate. (E. Forbes), . . .	13	Wheel of Life, The. (C. Scott), . . .	3
Resurrection of His Grace, The. (Rae-Brown), . . .	24	Where the Oranges Grow. (N. A. Leyken), . . .	13
Ringan Gilhaize. (J. Galt), . . .	10	Williams, Ernest E. An Exile in Bohemia, . . .	12
Rip Van Winkle. (W. Irving), . . .	26	Williams, Ellen. Anna Marsden's Experiment, . . .	24
Rogers, W. S. A Book of the Poster, . . .	5	Woman. (Rev. T. A. Seed and A. Fouillée), . . .	5
Romance of a Harem, . . .	18	Woman and the Wits. (G. Monkshood), . . .	9
SADLEIR, Mrs. An Uncanny Girl, . . .	25	Wratislaw, T. Algernon Charles Swinburne, . . .	2
Sadleir, Mrs. Such is the Law, . . .	16	YEAR BOOK OF THE STAGE, The. (L. A. Greening), . . .	7
Salathiel. (Dr Croly), . . .	11	ZOLA, E. A Dead Woman's Vow, . . .	18
Sapho. (Daudet), . . .	18	Zoroastro. (C. J. Thompson), . . .	18
Scott, C. The Wheel of Life, . . .	3		
Scott, C. Madonna Mia, . . .	20		
Scott, C. Some Notable Hamlets, . . .	3		

